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SINCLAIR user

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THE RETURN OF ULTIMATE

Are they still No 1?



ROLE PLAY



WIZARD, WARLOCK OR THIEF WHICH ARE YOU?

POKES FOR: ● FIST II ● IMPOSSABALL ● BOMBJACK II

1986 READERS' POLL RESULTS ● SIR CLIVE'S Z88 REVIEWED

ARKANOID ● LEADER BOARD ● SIGMA 7

SOFTWARE SECRETS – WIN A DAY WITH GREMLIN GRAPHICS

HOW GOOD WILL PLUS 3 DISC GAMES BE?

Star Raid

The Great Galactic Adven



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SOFTWARE


▲ Terror of the Deep



▲ Arkanoid



▲ Leader Board



▲ Sidney Affair

ARCADE

STRATEGY/SIMULATION

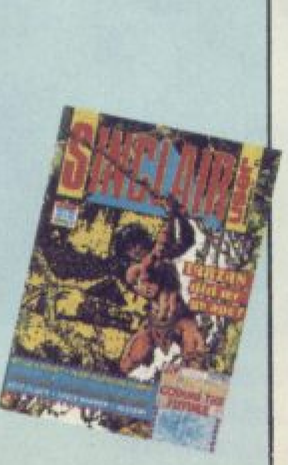
BUDGET

ADVENTURE

WE ARE FIVE!

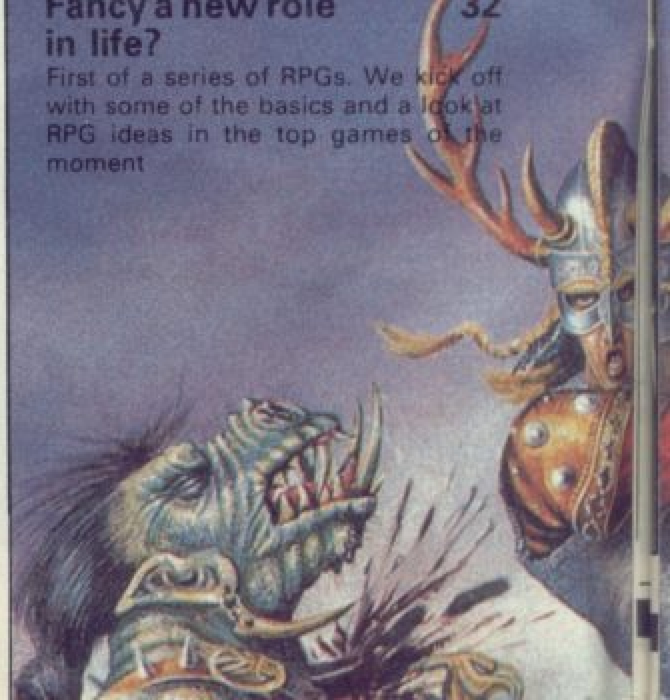
And to celebrate we present a not entirely serious look at software through the ages – from the ZX81 to the 128K+2





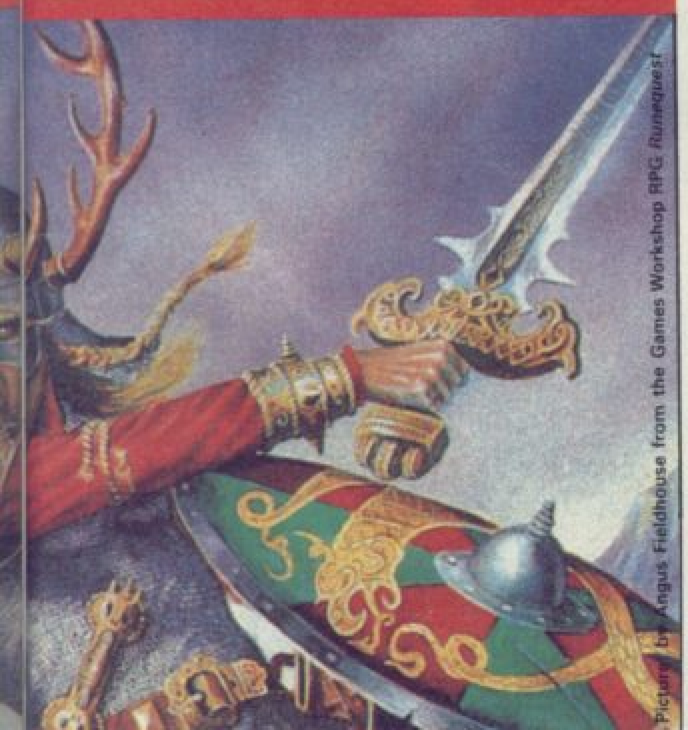
ROLE PLAYING

First of a series of RPGs. We kick off with some of the basics and a look at RPG ideas in the top games of the moment



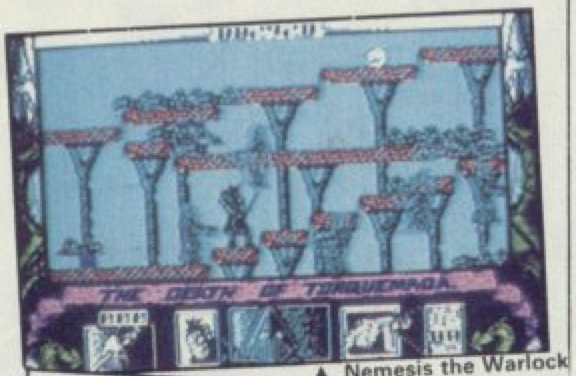
E·N·T·S

G GAMES SPECIAL



Picture by Angus Fieldhouse from the Games Workshop RPG *Runequest*

PREVIEWS

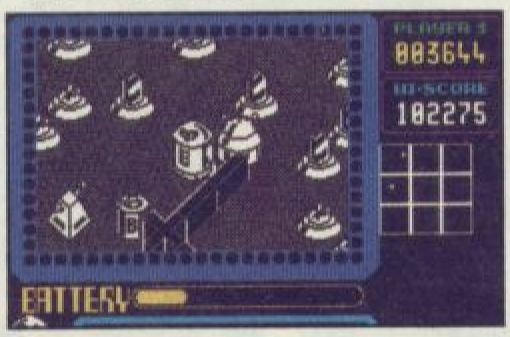


▲ Nemesis the Warlock



▲ Garfield

COVER GAME



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Jack the Nipper Gremlin

I am writing about the game Jack the Nipper which I bought, thinking it was a good game. After 24 hours, I found it extremely boring. When you have found out most of the havoc you can cause, it is an uneventful game and I haven't played it since. Why, oh, why did you give it a higher rating than the game Storm which is much better and will keep you going for much longer■

Jeremy Gardner
Gateshead
Game Choice:
Nemesis

Dragons Lair Software Projects

Dragons Lair is actually not such a bad game. It has good graphics and I like screen one. The winds which try to blow you off the falling platform are extremely hard to get past but I did and screen two is also good. I have almost done it. I think the bit when Dirk smashes the skeleton hand with his sword has great graphics and I also like the part where Dirk dies and the skeleton swirls round and joins back together. I hope to get past screen two soon■

Andrew Evans
Dyfed
Game Choice:
Uridium

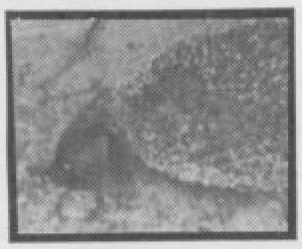


Future Games Mastertronic



This game has everything. It has five events and kicks the stuffing out of any other piece of budget software and most full price software. Event one involves running along a corridor jumping and ducking obstacles on the way. Event two shows you on three rocks and as meteors fly towards you, you must jump from rock to rock. Event three is a sideways scrolling blast-em-to bits. Good fun. Event four is toxrad shooting. In this event a gunsight is shown on a scenic background. But small discs fly from mouths of badgers and must be shot. Event five is the joystick knackering 'Decathlon'-style run. To get to and from each event you have to get through a shoot-em-up which is very tricky and very fast. All the events are great and the sampled drums and guitar make it the best game sound-wise as well. Get it now■

Andrew Austin
East Sussex
Game Choice:
World Games



Breakthru US Gold

How can Jim Douglas give Breakthru 4 out of 5? The graphics are not exactly brill and the crash detection is pathetic! And who chose the keys??? I would have to be made of rubber to reach U for up, D for down, X for speed up and Z for slow down. (Plus 6 for fire and space for jump). The response to key-presses is also slow. It takes ages for the car to rise into the air after space has been pressed (repeatedly I might add). I would give it only 2 or 3 stars■

David Harden
Cheshire
Game Choice:
Scalextric



Kane Firebird

Oh dear, I said to myself as the game loaded "No loading screen, looks cheap and nasty". But however it turned but to be a decent game.

The first level is boring and a total waste of time, all you have to do is position the cursor just before the birds and fire. Shooting lots of birds earns lives. The second level is better but not that much, just ride to the right of the scrolling landscape jumping over rocks and bushes. The third is easily the best level. You have to shoot the enemy bandits which appear: at doors, windows and on the roof. The fourth level is like the second but you have to get to the front of a train it is also harder.
I would have given this game four stars■

Paul Wojnicki
Normanton
Game Choice:
Avenger

128K Advanced Art Studio Rainbird

Great, Brill, Fantastic, you've given this your exclusive five star, solid gold rating and actually deserved it. It's so easy to use and draw pictures with, usable with umpteen joysticks, keyboard control and mouse. You can draw an image, expand it, shrink it and rotate it to almost any angle and colour it. Spray the section with the spray can if it's required or choose variable widths of pen or paint brush. The menus just simply pull down for easy access and, by the way it's all icon driven. The Art Studio is worked with cassette or microdrive, also column



printers are supported, for printing out your pictures. Thirty four fill textures with solid texture option, and wash texture makes the program a lot more powerful. You can rotate the picture and invert the picture, magnify the pictures and there are many more features, such as many shapes and many more things. "Its Brill"■

Michael Clare
Hull
Game Choice:
Nemesis

EastEnders Macsen



After reading a preview on EastEnders I quickly went out and bought a copy of it. An avid fan of EastEnders I ran home and loaded it – and nearly died. The game is totally chronic. The buildings are just coloured blocks that started to flash and clash with other things as soon as I started it. The sound is lousy and graphics are poor. For near £10 its a ★★★¡¡¡¿ swindle. If you lurch out and buy it on instinct, like I did, I feel sorry for you. A tenner can get you much better things in life. Forget it! It'll put you right off Eastenders■

Ian Miles
Winchester
Game Choice:
Enduro Racer



Super Soccer Imagine

I disagree with your review of Super Soccer. I think it should have got a lower mark than it did, the gameplay is awful with big chunky players that are impossible to control even on joystick.
The game is far too difficult (I haven't even managed to win a game yet!). The graphics are drab with boring colours and attribute problems. Overall I was extremely disappointed when I bought this game■

Alan Lomer
Reading
Game Choice:
Ikari Warriors

write stuff...

Goonies
US Gold

At £7.95 this game is a total rip off. This is a very bad version of Bruce Lee. The graphics are rather small and undetailed, colour is OK, and the sound is awful. The two-player option earns it a few points, but are hardly enough to justify its price. Give it a miss■

Balazs Kovari
Abu Dhabi
Game Choice:
Gauntlet



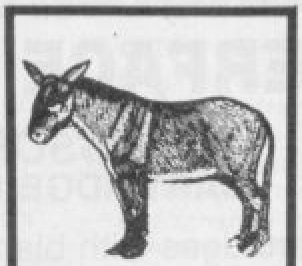
Conquestador
Melbourne House

Again a disappointment. Not only Zap Chat is getting worse, also your reviews. Funny little games, like Conquestador, are not appreciated anymore. It's a funny game with good, clear graphics and many screens. For people like me, who set everything in map, it's a delight. The gameplay is



simple, you can kill the enemies just with jumping into them. The plot is simple, the teleport stations are highly original, as is the change into a dragon is. So, I say, it's worth at least a 4 star rating. The bad things on the game are the price (over-priced), and the arrows, that sometimes seems to be squares. The good thing is that you can enjoy yourself for a couple of secs without playing Great Escape (brilliant) or Dynamite Dan (great)■

Paul Blijham
Holland
Game Choice:
Space Harrier



Donkey Kong
Ocean

What's going on? Doney Kong from Ocean should carry a government health warning! It's a bit behind its times. You should get £7.95 if you take the risk of playing this trash. As Jim Douglas said in your January SU, progress? who cares? Nowadays there's no point in bringing it out it's so boring. I'm sure I fell asleep in the game. If you like it then there must be something wrong with you■

Stephen Shelley
Kidderminster
Game Choice:
W.A.R.



EastEnders
Macsen

Macsen software should be disgusted by putting this game on the market for £9.95. I believe it should come down to at least £1.99. It has poor graphics and has the least amount of playability and addicitive qualities. The only good thing about this game is the music and sound at the beginning. This game is not worth looking at, and definitely should not be bought■

Shahzad Zafer
Ahmend
Fulham
Game Choice:
Durell Big 4

Zub
Mastertronic

Fully agree with you. Mastertronic's Zub is totally brill. The graphics are great and the scrolling is superb. My only slight discontent is that there is no high score table, but this does not detract from the actual game■

Neil McGowan
Humberside
Game Choice:
Aliens

Fairlight II
Edge

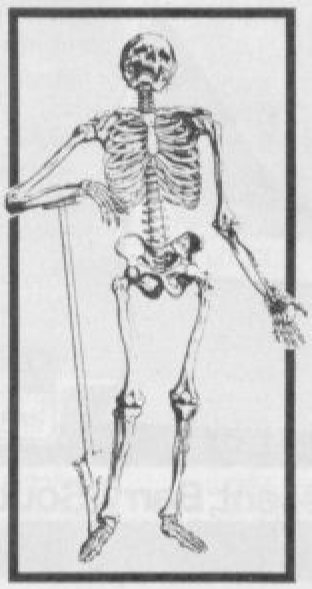
Mixed feelings about this game. Although as ever Bo Jangeborg's programming is brilliant, you get the feeling it was rushed to release it before Christmas. As a result the game is quite heavily bugged – energy rockets to about 250 for no reason at all, things disappear, and monsters begin appearing and then disappearing again. Rooms around the castle seem to move around at random too. Part 1 is very easy, it took me just one weekend to complete, but part 2 is very hard. I also feel it places more strength on arcade skills than it predecessor■

Mike Hood
Manchester
Game Choice:
Space Harrier

Ghost 'n' Goblins
Elite

Who ever said Ghost 'n' Goblins has good sound effects should be shot! The graphics aren't that bad but as for the sound, it's hopeless!! If you're thinking of buying it save your money and buy Rambo. Rambo's great. Anyway, if you're stupid enough to have bought Ghost 'n' Goblins here are a few tips. . . if you want to kill the angel at the end of section one you must stop just when he appears on the screen then if you've got either the lance or the sword press fire about five times, jump straight up and fire five times again and he should die■

W Stevens
Mitcham
Game Choice:
Paper Boy





Highlander
Ocean

You were dead right about Highlander. The game is so boring and bad that I only played it once and refused to play it a second time. The graphics are really poor and the sound even worse. After playing The Great Escape I thought Ocean would keep producing excellent games, but I was wrong. Not a game to be included amongst your software collection■

Firas Massaud
Switzerland
Game Choice:
Cobra

Nemesis
Konami

After becoming Elite, I took up "The Final Challenge". Being a hip sort of guy and owning a MSX I got Nemesis for that, but I had to get it for my first love, the Spectrum. Wow, what speed, what colour, what sound! Nemesis is the best thing out since Jetpac!! Highly playable and very addictive. If you like the coin-op, then you'll love this, it's the sort of game that lasts and lasts, no one quick go for a few days and never play it again. At £7.95 this is a must. Classic is an under rating. Just brill■

Tim Lawton
West Sussex
Game Choice:
Little Computer People



Every so often — well very often actually — you write to tell us that we know nothing about anything and insist that some program we trashed is actually the best game ever. Conversely you blast us for saying something is great that you absolutely loath and detest.

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* **Reviews supplied without full name and address will not be considered for publication.**

JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

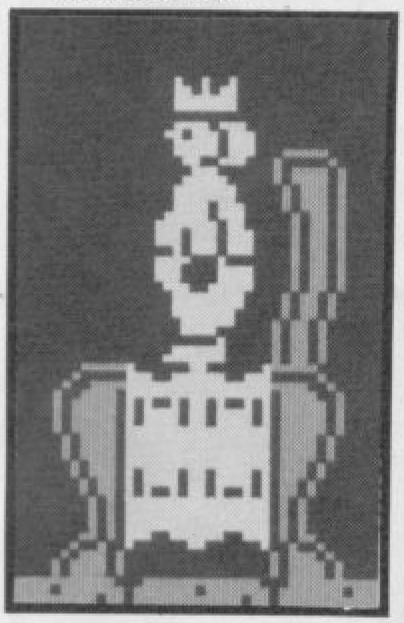


March? What does the month of March mean to you? Probably nowt, but it's a little known fact that March is the anniversary of the day when I bought my first Spectrum, a wonderful and advanced 16K version. Since Then, my machine has broken down 7.777 (recurring) times and even my new Spectrum 128K+2 has clapped out and gone to Amstrad for a major overhaul. March also marks another change in *Zap Chat.* We've included a reader's chart and also the terribly fabulous Point to Point, where we scan through the harder screens of one game per month.

King's Keep

Somebody who didn't even give their name and address wrote to say just how to complete Firebird's game in 38 easy steps. Flex the old fingers and away we go:

- Take the wine from the wine cellar
- Take the towel from the dungeon door room
- Take the lyre and music page (Elaine. Get it?) This is in the Jester's room



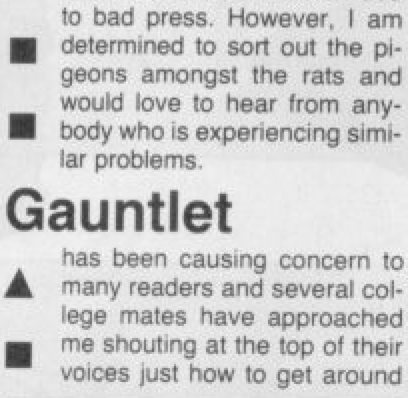
- Take the chicken (from the kitchen)
- Get the knife out of the cooking pot
- Exchange the chicken for the gold coin with the King. He's on his throne
- Exchange the music page, then play the lyre to the King
- Take the wand and the bat's wing from the Wizard's room
- Exchange the silver knife for the shawl which the damsel has
- Give the coin to the guard in the dungeon
- Exchange the shawl for the handkerchief with the old hag in the dungeon
- Give the hanky to damsel who in return will give you the washroom key
- Open washroom door, then take the soap and shield
- Wear the shield (Use)
- Put bat eyes, bat's wing, and burnt wand into the cooking pot in the kitchen
- Take the new wand out of the cooking pot
- Open the attic door at the top of the staircase
- Take the chest key. (Attic key)
- Open chest, take scroll which is in the same room
- Stand on scroll to jump over tube shaped passage
- Take bone
- Stand on music page to go back through tube
- Pick up the scroll again
- Give the crazy old man the bone
- Take the playing card from the lonely room
- Give the crazy old man the bone
- Take the playing card from the lonely old room (eh?)
- Exchange playing card with magic stone. (The jester)
- Put the magic stone into the cauldron in the kitchen
- Get the bucket (inside the cooking pot)
- Fill the bucket and enter the wash room
- Give the soap, full bucket, and towel to the old hag in exchange for the feather
- Use the Sleep spell to eliminate all forbidden areas
- Take the book from the secret hideaway
- Take the golden rod from the King's bedroom
- Take the golden hand from the Treasure room
- Take the helmet (in the only remaining forbidden room)
- Wear helmet
- Take the golden rod and golden handle to drawbridge and attach them to the lever
- When the drawbridge flashes, use the book

Tomahawk

will not load into my Spectrum 128K+2 and have heard rumours concerning the same from other frustrated users. Fear not, author DL Marshall replied after three months, stating that my machine was the cause of the trouble and that the rumours were all due to bad press. However, I am determined to sort out the pigeons amongst the rats and would love to hear from anybody who is experiencing similar problems.

Gauntlet

has been causing concern to many readers and several college mates have approached me shouting at the top of their voices just how to get around



the game. Steven Etheridge, from Birmingham, worte to say that if you press *Space* or *Shift* and then your *Fire* button you can reappear from the dead and play on. Other people say your man can walk through walls if you press *Space*. Whichever works, here is a program to help out all those people who purchased the earlier version of the game (the one with joystick bug). It should (give or take an onion) give you infinite health.

```
6 REM ANTONY SHIPLEY, FROM KETTERING
10 CLEAR 28999: LET tot=0
20 FOR a=29000 TO 29014
30 READ d: LET tot=tot+d: POKE a,d
40 NEXT a: IF tot<>1601 THEN PRINT AT 10,10; "ERROR IN DATA": STOP
50 DATA 62,255,17,81,1,221, 33,0,128,55,205,86,5,251,201
60 CLS: PRINT AT 10,10:"Play the tape"
70 RANDOMIZE USR 29000:RANDOMIZE USR 29000
80 POKE 32793,38:POKE 32794,128
90 POKE 32863,241: POKE 32864,255
100 LET a=33047
110 READ d: IF d=9999 THEN RANDOMIZE 32791
120 POKE a,d: LET a=a+d: GOTO 110
130 DATA 62,201,50,104, 189,195,0,132,9999
```

MAP CHAT

And we thought we'd take a look at the absolutely wonderful

Xeno

for one simple reason. It's the sort of game that exceeds the reviews and then nothing is heard about it.

I though it was so good.

● TIPS ON ATTACKING THE COMPUTER:

When the computer is about to kick off it will always shoot the ball straight at your counter although the strength of its attack will always considerably differ from what you expect.

Diagram 1 shows an example of what the computer is likely to do in this position. It will hit the ball and that in turn will collide up and into your counter, pushing it back a certain distance. Usually the ball will then bounce off your counter back towards the computer's goal and it will be deflected at a certain angle. It's then your turn, and you can line up the ball and bash it.

Depending on the angle at which you hit the ball and the strength of your shot, the ball gloats off into either of the three positions shown in Diagram 2. It could shoot off up on to the top 'cushion' and here it will come to a grinding halt (Numero A on Diagram 2) If you are incredibly lucky, the ball will bounce off the lower cushion and head straight into the goal (Position 3, Diagram 2). Otherwise, the ball will coast to the goal but halt at Position 2, just outside the goal. This is be far the best position to be in. The computer is not stupid, and won't shoot the ball into its own goal, but will instead choose to try to hit the lower cushion in just the right position to rebound off and hit the ball away from the goal.

Here's another novel way of confusing the computer oppenent totally. When it's your turn to kick off, set your cursor at full length towards the opponent's goal and then tap the 'up' key to put a very slight angle on the ball. Press *Fire* and the counter will crash into the ball and whack it past the computer's counter and towards the goal. Although it is impossible to score straight from the kick-off, it is a very good way of getting the ball right into the opponent's half and in many cases, positioned right in front of the goal. If you find that you are having problems with this method (see Diagram 3) then the solution is simply to cut down on the angle placed on the ball.

● DEFENCE TACTICS:

The best way to prevent the **Xeno** computer from beating you is to simply turn the computer off! If this method does not appeal to you, then you might consider one of the following courses of evasive action. Firstly, there is the rebound technique. In Diagram 4 your counter is within reach of the ball and you may be able to hit the goal itself and then cleverly rebound off and hit the ball away.

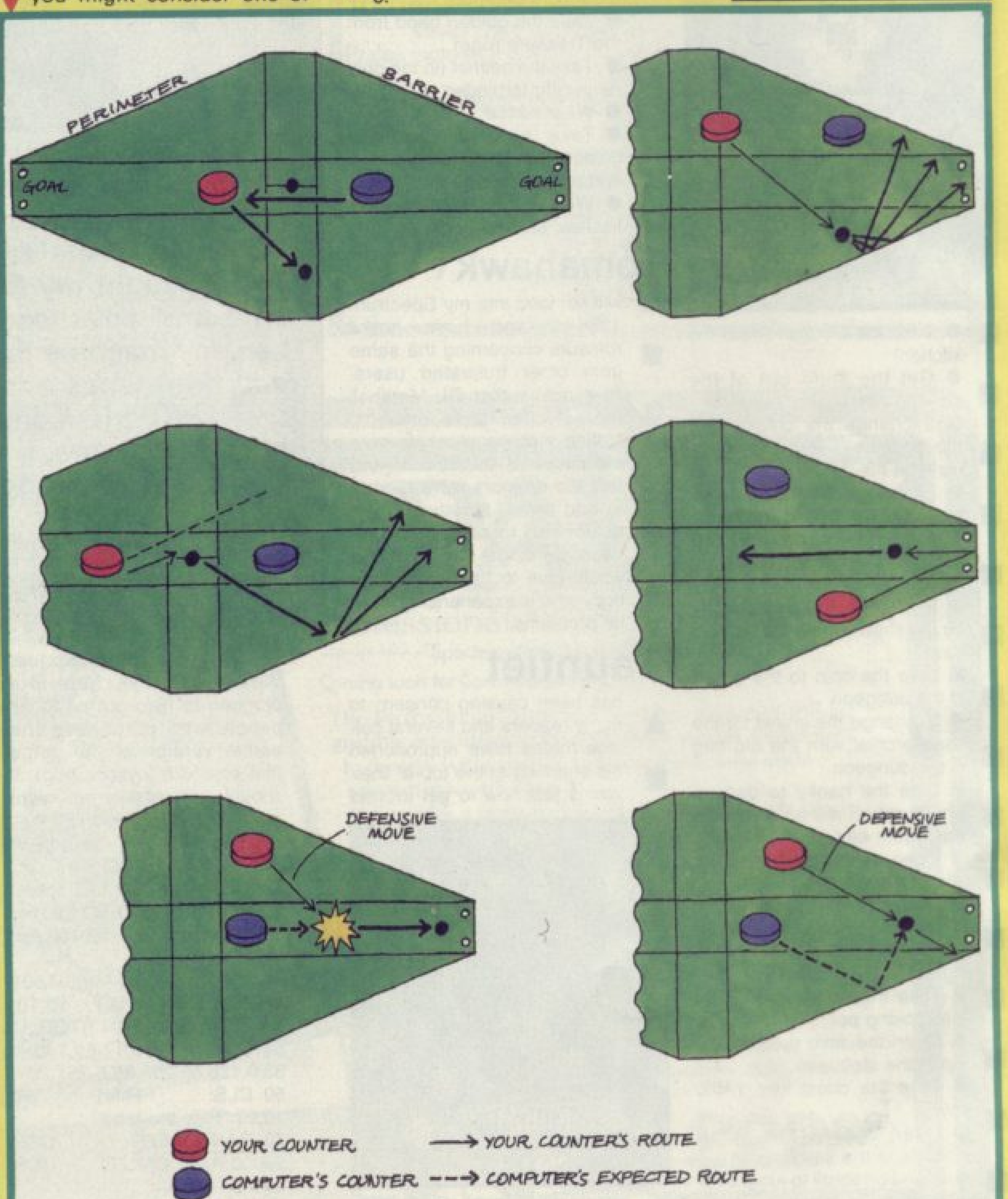
Secondly, you can be destructive and as the computer tries to hit the ball, you can line your own counter up and knock the computer out of the way. Diagram 5 shows an example of this. If the ball is closer to you, it would be more advisable here to try to hit the ball away before the computer counter even has a chance to get to it. This method is shown in Diagram 6.

And the second game map is for Hewson's

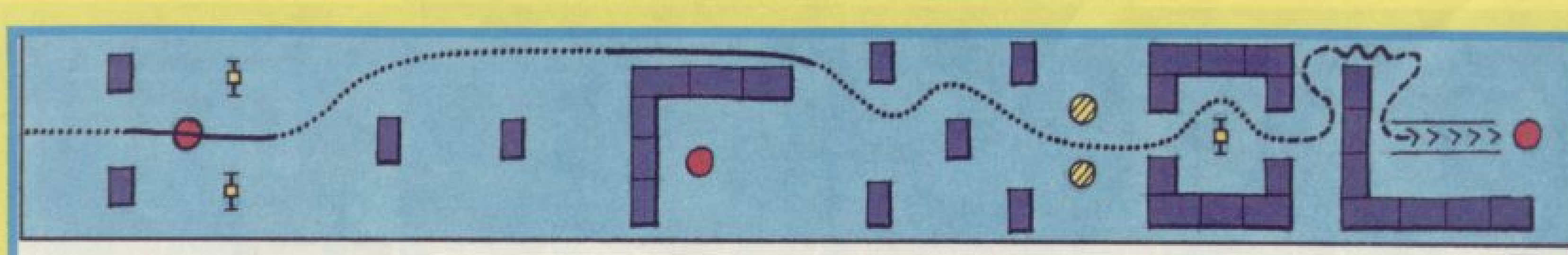
Uridium

All the later levels showing the safest and quickest route through the obstacles – when to flip on edge and so on

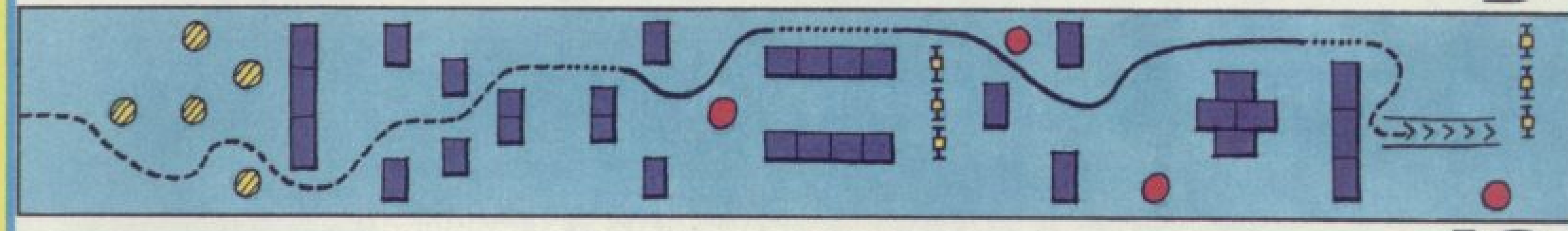
Uridium map – the hardest levels sorted out ►



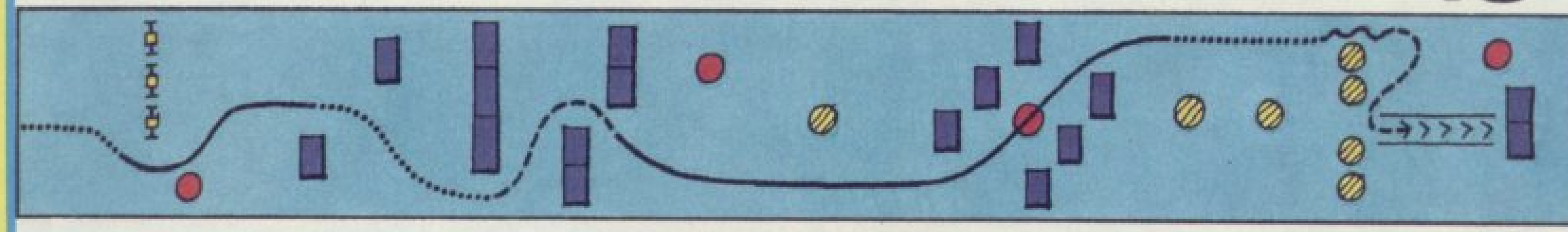
Xero map – or how to win in six easy stages ►



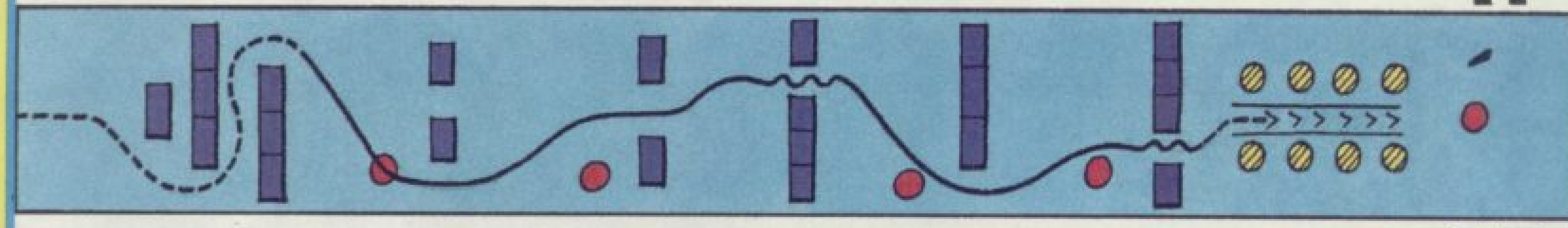
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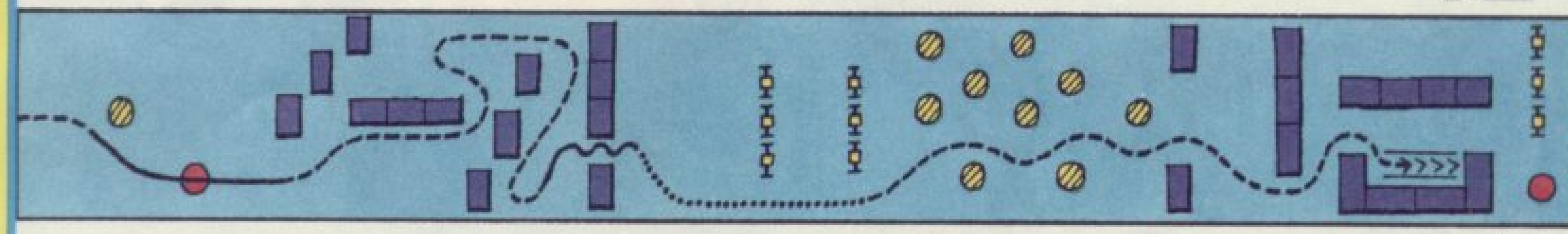
10



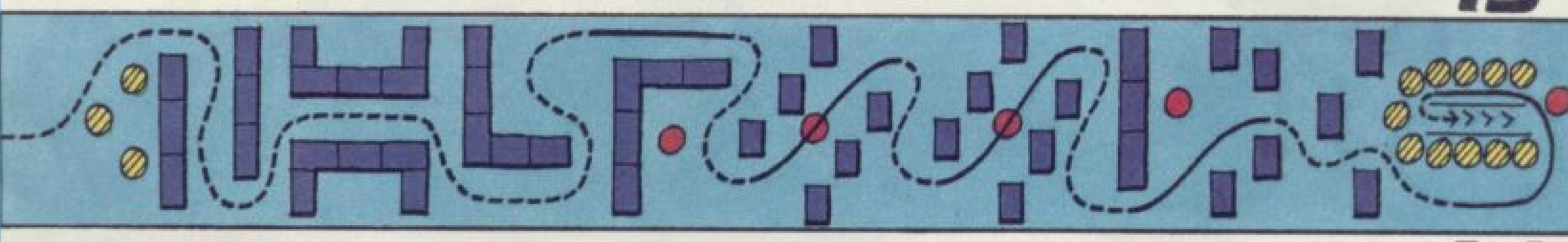
11



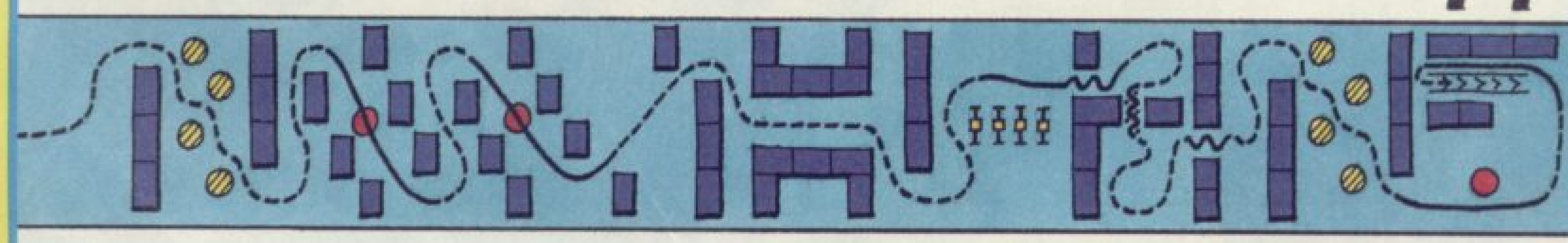
12



13

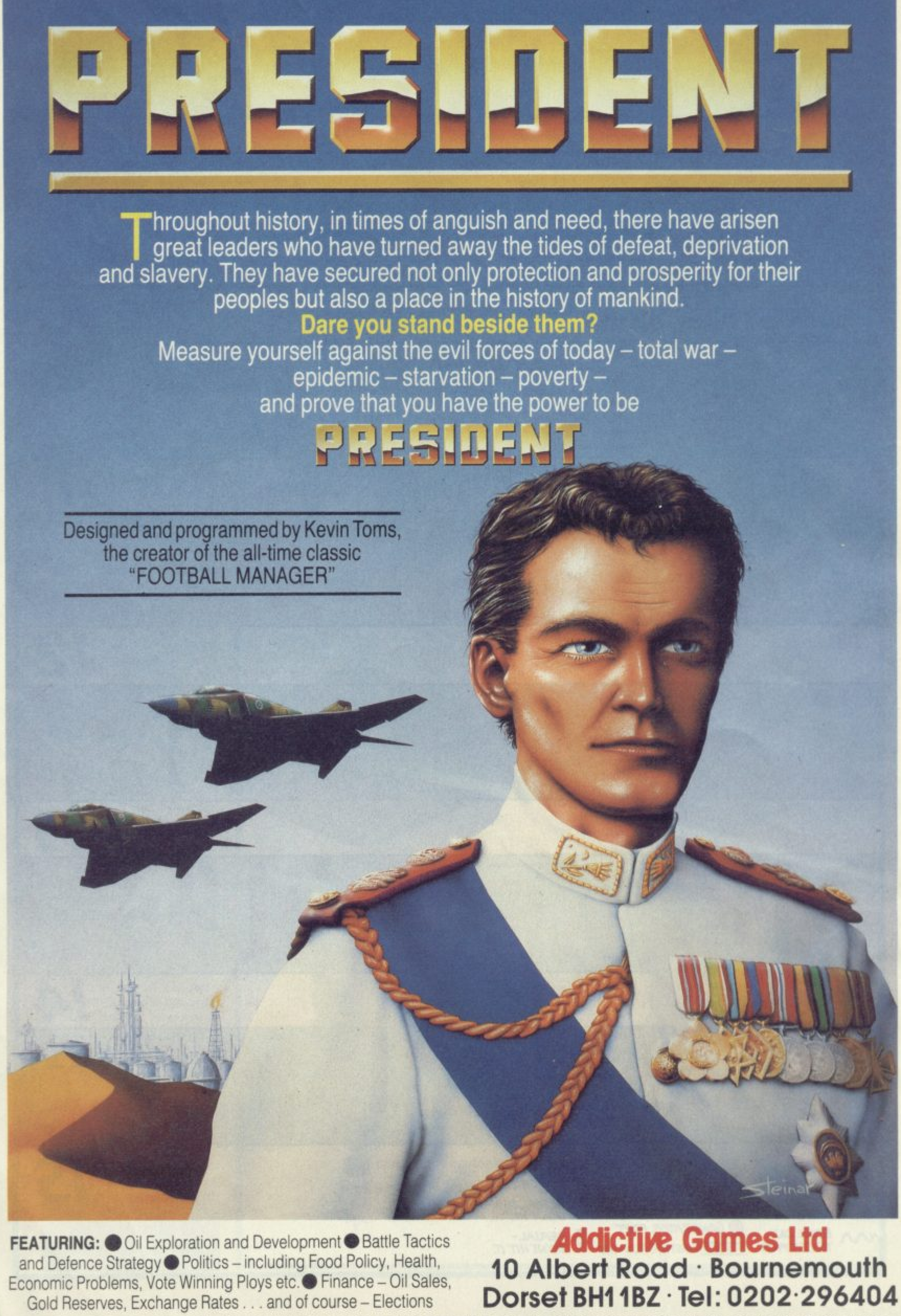


14

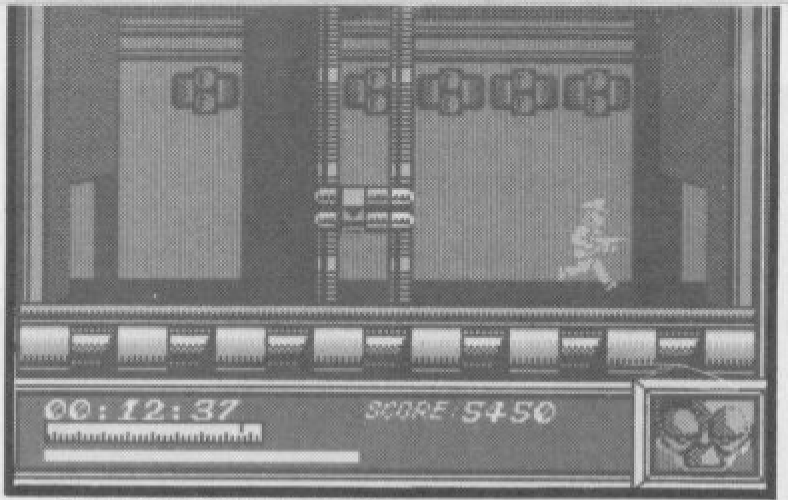


15

- FAST (solid line)
- SLOW (dashed line)
- ANY SPEED (dotted line)
- EDGE ON TO GET PAST
- NIFTY MANOEUVRE! FLIP AND GO DOWN TO SUCCEED
- GENERATOR PORT
- MASTER RUNWAY
- WALL – DON'T HIT IT.
- AERIAL THINGEY – DON'T HIT IT.
- AERIAL – DON'T HIT IT.

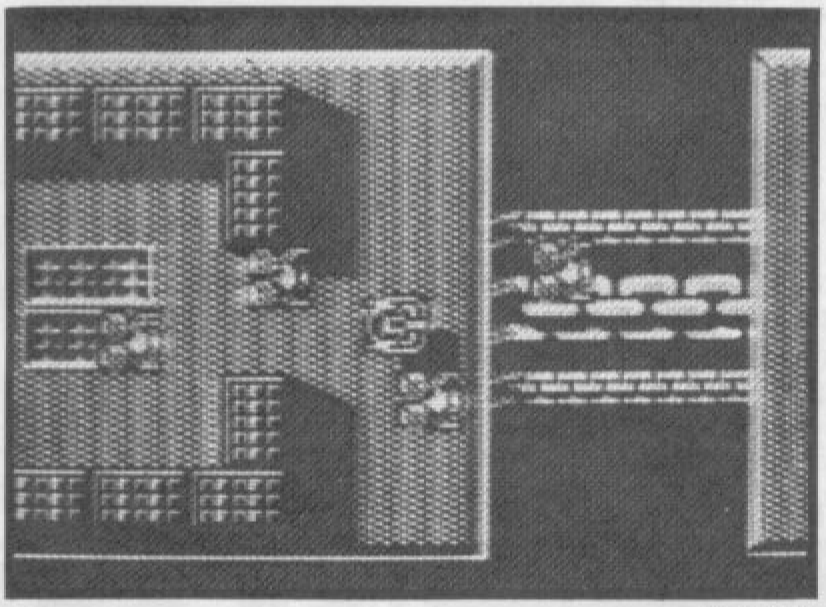

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JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT



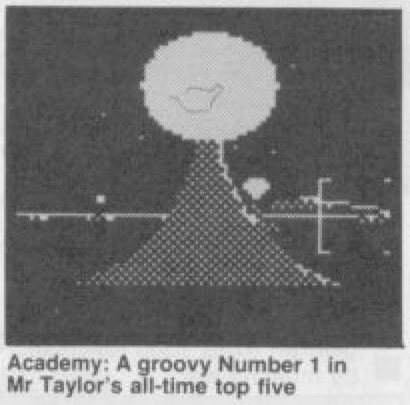
Dan Dare: Groovy Number 2 in Mark's chart

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▲Uridium

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Academy: A groovy Number 1 in Mr Taylor's all-time top five

Mark Taylor's Groovy Top 5 (In this case, not in order):

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3 Xeno
4 Dandy
5 Uridium

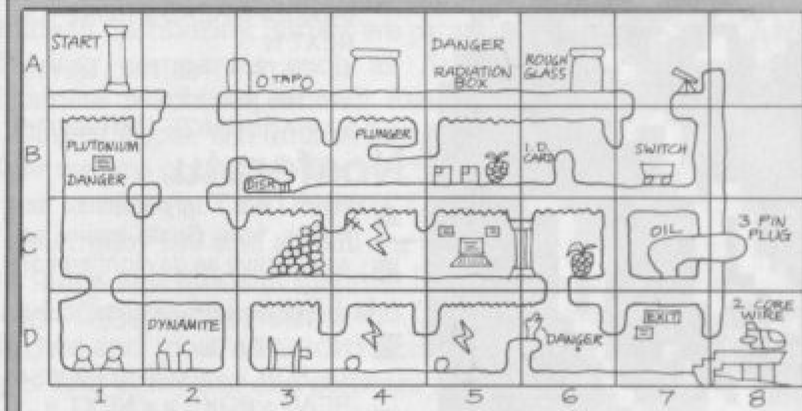
Naff release ever on the streets: **Kung Fu Master.**

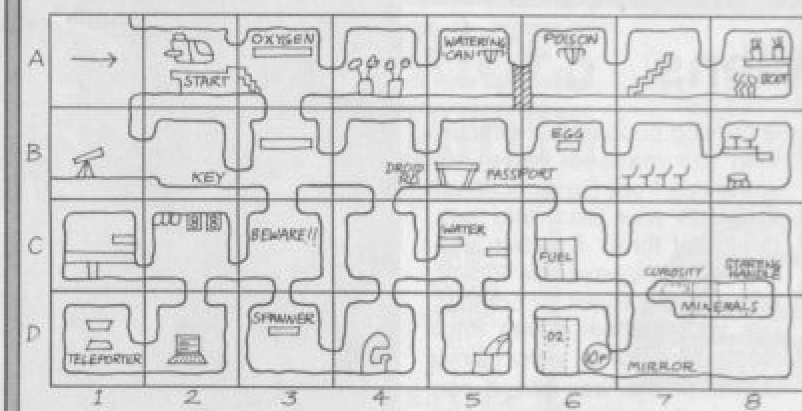
"Amazingly fast action and superb graphics all round. KFM is simply naff. By the way, my favourite group is *Level 42*. Is that it? When do I get paid Jon?"

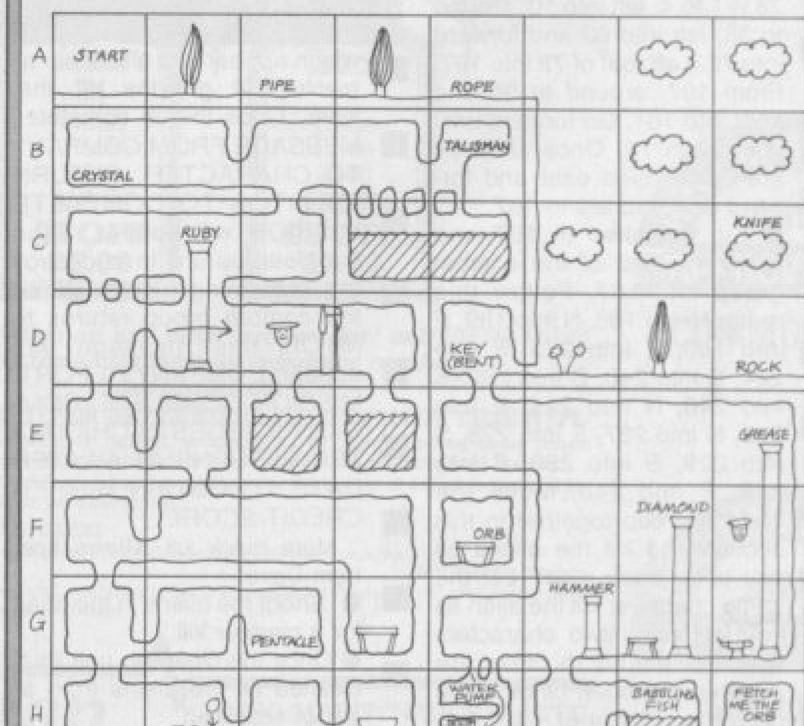
Universal Hero

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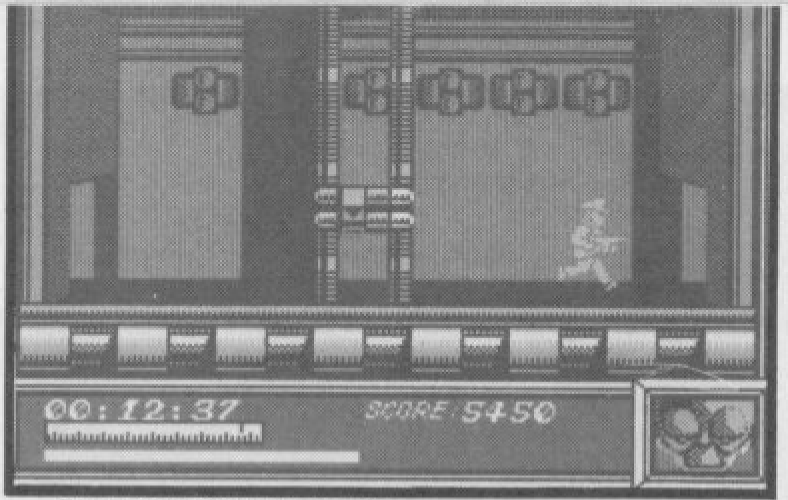
If you're still lost here's the diffinitive map of what can be found where and why





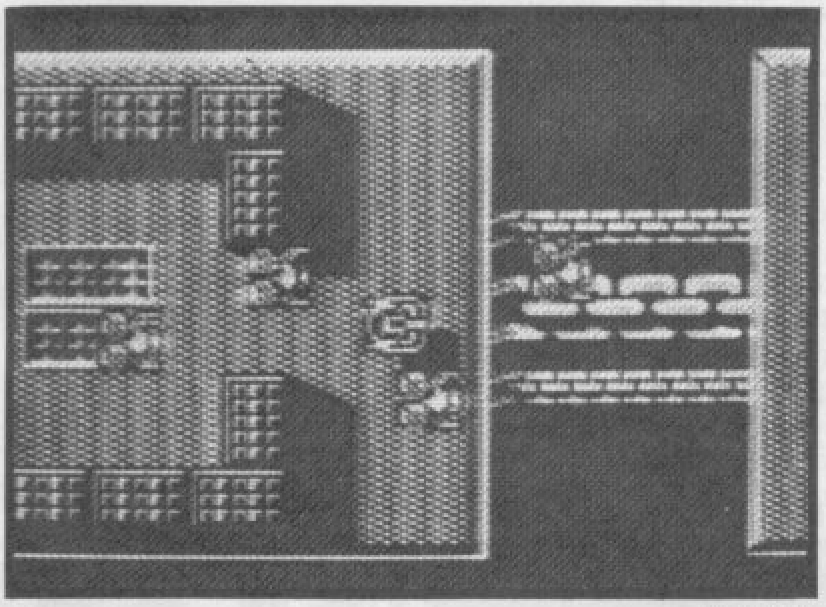


JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT



Dan Dare: Groovy Number 2 in Mark's chart

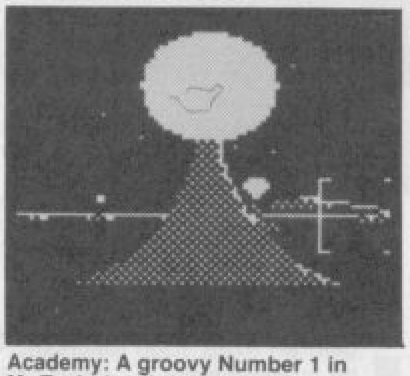
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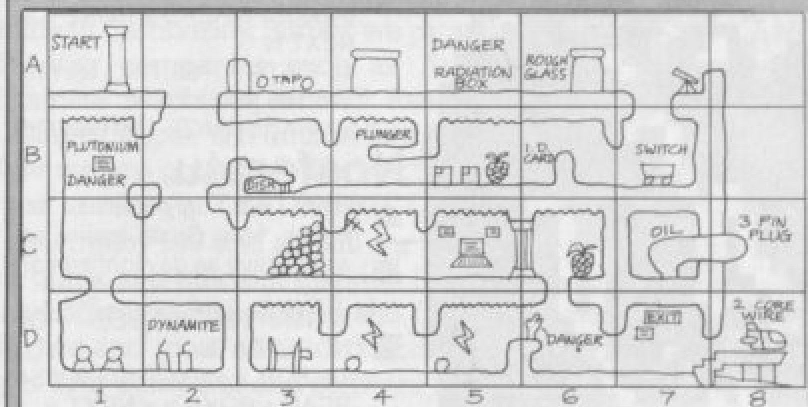
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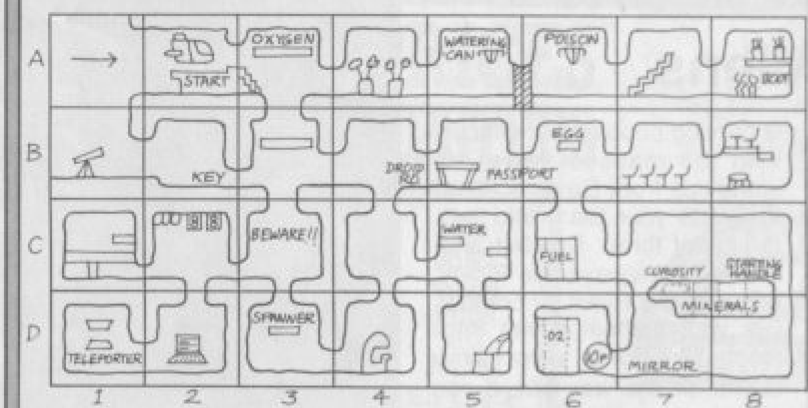
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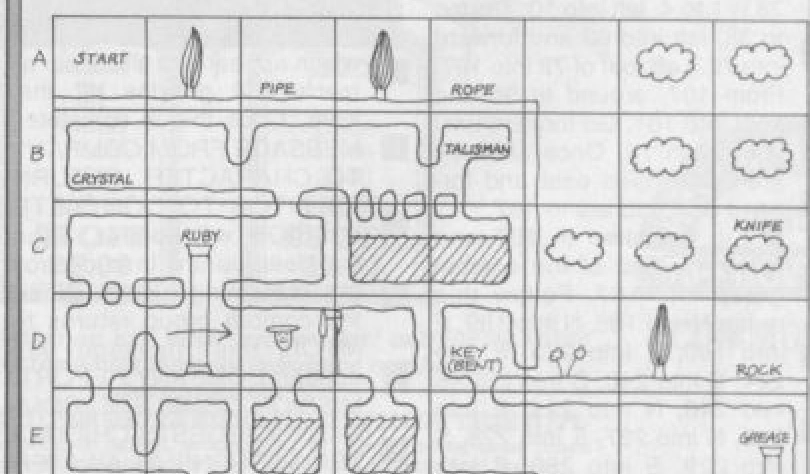
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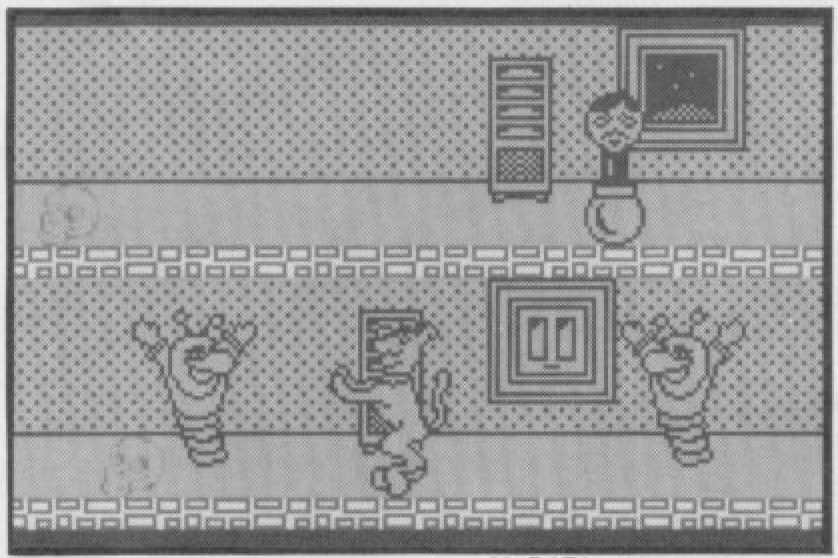


JON RIGLAR'S ZAP CHAT

Scooby Doo

Pokes and a bag of Sshkooby snanacks from Guido Algari (thanks).





```
1 REM SCOOBY DOO INFINITE LIVES
10 LOAD '''CODE: FOR N=64000 TO 64025:POKE N=24, PEEK N:POKE N,0:NEXT N
15 FOR N=64002 TO 640002+6:READ a:POKE n,a:NEXT N
40 DATA 33,174,115,119,195,168,97
50 RANDOMIZE USR 63976
```

Nosferatu

rears his ugly head, but Pokes, from Guido again, are as effective as daylight against him

```
1 REM INVINCIBLE FOR NOSFERATU
10 FOR a=30000 TO 30054:READ s:POKE a,s:NEXT a
20 RANDOMIZE USR 30000
30 DATA 221,33,203,92,17,211,1,62,255,55,205,86,5,48,41,33,100,93,54,176,35,54,254,120,0,17,176,254,33,85,117,237,176. ,195,216,92,33,17,126,175,119,35,119,35,119,33,174,138,119,35,119,195,0,118
```

At the time of writing (early Feb), **Judge Dredd** (the game) was not out (sob) and so the whole Zapchat Challenge was in a dilemma.

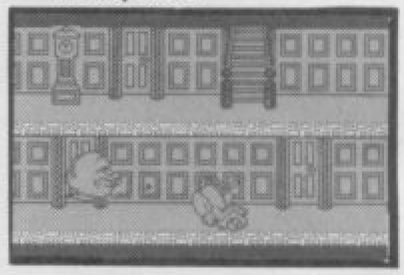
So we've postponed **Judge D** until next month and instead this month we had a bash at the totally wonderful

Xeno

from A 'n' F. Mark decided that he was absolutely wonderful and challenged yours truly to a three game duel where the loser puts the kettle on for a cup of coffee. For the technically minded among you, the quarter length was two minutes and the timeout was set at six seconds. After arguing for ten minutes over who should use what side of the keyboard, play commenced and the results are:

Game Number	Jon	Mark
01	2	4
02	4	5
03	4	3

Mark began to bang the keys and complain that the computer was not working properly as soon as he started to lose. Of course, I did not complain when I lost which was, of course, due to the sun in my eyes. However, after the game finished, his nibs went on to beat the computer 10-0. I am planning a competition for the **Xeno** players out there. If you consider yourself wonderfully talented at the game, write in to me and we'll organise a play off. Mark will, of course, demand to use the right side of the keyboard.



Aliens

is proving popular, but difficult, with the masses. Here are some tips from Dave Holland.

● Divide your team into two groups of three: Combat and Clean-up. I always use Ripley, German and Hicks for combat. Get your combat group into room 78. Don't shoot any aliens on the way but, if you come across one in room 78 kill it. The best route to room 78 is 1 to 4, left into 10, around to 36, left into 69 and forward into 72. Left, out of 72 into 107. From 107, around to 96 and right into 161. Go forward until you reach 78. Once all three are in 78 head east and forward until you are in 187.

● Kill the alien in 187 and move the rest of the combat group into 187. Follow this route: N into 186, N into 189, E into 190, E into 223, E into 224, S into 240, S into 239, E into 246, N into 241, E into 242, N into 227, E into 228, S into 229, S into 230, E into 247, E into 248. Move the combat group together in this section and kill the aliens as you enter each room. Let the same character kill the alien as you will need two characters with full ammo to clear the queen's chamber. Once in the queen's chamber, kill the queen and any other aliens which appear and also clear all mechanical growths off the walls. Once this is complete: MESSAGE FROM COMPANY TO CHARACTER. RETURN TO MTOB TO COMPLETE MISSION will appear. Send the clean-up unit in to destroy the remaining aliens. When the combat group returns to MTOB this message will appear: COMPANY REPORT. MISSION COMPLETE. COMPANY SUGGESTS CHARACTER RETURNS AT A LATER DATE TO OBTAIN HIGHER CREDIT SCORE.

More quick kill **Aliens** tips from Dave:

● Shoot the aliens in the head for a cleaner kill

● Once the clean-up unit has cleaned all the aliens from a sector seal it off

● Keep the two units close together, except when you are moving from room 1 to 78 and from 78 to 187

● Do not shoot Newt. You gain an extra 1000 points just by meeting her



▲Nosferatu

POKE CORNER

ONCE again, we come to the assistance of Multiface 1 owners. Here are some Pokes for the wonderful game from CRL **Academy** sent in by Stewart Carr. The ammo, missiles, bombs and flares Pokes are all temporary storage locations and are overwritten every time you are killed or quit. The cost/weight should be changed after you put all equipment to full on designing the skimmer. The progress report can be changed at anytime.

Use these codes:

26497 – Cost (100 or less)
24496 – Weight
26458 – Progress report 1
26459 – Progress report 2
26460 – Progress report 3
26461 – Progress report 4
47754 – Missiles (max 255)
47755 – Ammo (max 255)
47756 – Flares (max 255)
47757 – Bombs (max 255)

DRAGON'S LAIR – Poke 32719,0 (infinite lives)

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5 POKES

***W**hat's the biggest thing in the whole universe that everyone wants? Infinity, that's what. Infinity is big. It's more lives than a zillion cats, it's more time than life itself and more destruction than Ronnie and Gorbachov put together. It's about time somebody started taking Poke seriously. And this is it.*

Each month we're going to take some of the hottest new releases and give you the cheat codes.

And to make it extra easy they'll be complete program listings that are simplicity themselves to type in and get working.

All you have to do for infinite lives, infinite time, infinite ammunition or infinite whatever is type in the short listing, Run the program and simply Load in your game in the normal way. Couldn't be simpler, could it?

IMPOSSABALL

```
1 CLEAR 25599
5 PRINT AT 10,2;"START IMPOSSABALL MASTER TAPE"
10 LOAD ""CODE
20 POKE 64531,86
30 RANDOMIZE USR 64512
40 POKE 65123,195
45 POKE 65124,20
50 POKE 65125,255
60 FOR f=65300 TO 65309
65 READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
70 DATA 175,50,225,160,33
75 DATA 113,254,195,102,254
80 RANDOMIZE USR 65082
```

Type in and *Run* the program, and load in the game tape. Once loaded, you will now have UNLIMITED balls. It should now just take precision to conquer the tricky screens

BOMBJACK

```
1 CLEAR 60000
5 PRINT AT 10,3;"START 'BOMB JACK II' TAPE"
10 LOAD ""CODE
15 POKE 65226,250
20 FOR f=64000 TO 64007
25 READ a: POKE f,a
30 NEXT f
50 DATA 62,50,50,213,144
60 DATA 195,0,91
100 RANDOMIZE USR 64705
```

Death is a regular occurrence in this Elite game, so the Poke will give BOTH players (on the two-player game) or ONE player (on the one-player game) and UNLIMITED SUPPLY OF LIVES

ALL POKES CREATED BY ADRIAN SINGH

FIST II

```
5 CLEAR 65535
6 PRINT AT 10,3;"START FIST II MASTER TAPE"
10 FOR f=65200 TO 65237
15 READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
50 DATA 221,33,175,253,17
55 DATA 171,0,62,255,55
60 DATA 205,86,5,48,241
70 DATA 33,206,254,17,252
75 DATA 253,1,10,0,237
80 DATA 176,195,232,253,0
85 DATA 62,24,50,182,105
90 DATA 195,14,241
100 RANDOMIZE USR 65200
```

Enter and *Run* the above program as printed, and load in the game tape. Once loaded your will now have INFINITE lives, enabling you to survive deep into the heart of the game. Note: the lives counter does count down, but the game will not end once it reaches zero

AGENT ORANGE

```
5 CLEAR 53200
6 PRINT AT 10,1;"START AGENT ORANGE MASTER TAPE"
10 FOR f=53000 TO 53039
15 READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
30 DATA 6,3,197,221,33
35 DATA 0,206,17,0,1
40 DATA 62,255,55,205,86
45 DATA 5,193,16,239,33
50 DATA 41,207,17,214,206
55 DATA 1,10,0,237,176
60 DATA 195,0,206,175,50
65 DATA 183,144,195,44,133
100 RANDOMIZE USR 53000
```

Again type in and Run the program, and load in the game tape. You will now hav an INFINITE supply of ships for your quest to seed and harvest the planets. Be warn-ed, if you want to trade your ships, don't trade them all in – or else it's GAME OVER

BMX SIMULATOR

```
5 CLEAR 24900
6 PRINT AT 10,0;"START BMX SIMULATOR MASTER TAPE"
10 LOAD ""CODE
15 RESTORE 30
20 FOR f=65520 TO 65534
25 READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
30 DATA 241,221,33,0,64
35 DATA 17,0,27,62,255
40 DATA 55,205,86,5,221
45 DATA 33,68,97,17,152
50 DATA 158,62,255,55,205
55 DATA 86,5,62,58,50
60 DATA 112,192,195,140,185
70 RANDOMIZE USR 65520
```

Type in the above listing as it is printed, *Run* it and start the game tape. Once loaded, play will be as normal, except that now the clock does not count down, thus giving you ample time to complete each screen enabling you to reach further screens easily.

UNDER RAPS!

Palace's in-house programming team – the same one which produced **Cauldron** – is just putting the finishing touches to **Barbarian**. It's an arcade combat game, somewhat *a la mode* of **Dark Sceptre,** where large cartoon fantasy figures swing at each other with swords. It all sounds pretty interesting and, with a projected release date of May/June, it could beat Mike Singleton's effort on to the shelves

Key-line, a Danisssssh software development house, is – rather appropriately – programming **Vikings** for Creative Sparks. It's a smooth scrolling arcade romp set amongst ravening hoardes where an heroic Viking sets out to rescue the Warrior Queen (boring plot #1) who's being held captive. Cross seas, scale towers, burn down villages and master sacred labyrinths. All in all pretty innocent fun, for a 9ft Viking

Icon, the team handling **Flash Gordon** conversions, is programming **Milk Race** for Mastertronic. The game's sponsored by the Milk Marketing board and puts you in the saddle of a racing bike during the famous European Milk Race. Apart from the dangers of slippery roads, land slides et al, your cohorts can't touch you during the race and you only get food, drink and relief every 100 miles of the course. Phewie!

St Brides, those awfully nice Irish Ladies who produced that rabbity **Bugsy** adventure for CRL, are likely to start design and programming of **Jack The Ripper,** also for CRL, very shortly. It'll be a gothic adventure in the **Dracula** and **Frankenstein** mould. The game'll be written using Gilsoft's **Paw** adventure creator so a lot depends upon Gilsoft releasing the Spectrum version of the utility quickly

Design Design has been selected from a cast of thousands to program the Z80 versions of Domark's new 007 blockbuster **The Living Daylights**.(Spectrum and Amstrad yuk). Domark's been hunting for a bunch of hip dude prime programmers for the title since way back last year. **Living Daylights** wil now appear in June, shortly after the Bond film is premiered

Delali, the team which produced **Biggles**, for Mirrorsoft, is now programming **Mean Streak** again for the Maxwellian off-shoot. It's a hunter-killer motorboke chase designed by David Bishop (he's one of those rare breed of semi-professional games designers). You can view it at the *PCW Show* in September and probably buy it at the end of the year. You can't say we don't bring you the info early – (we may all have been nuked or got AIDS by then – who knows...)

Newsdate April

Whodu

FRANKENSTEIN

The theatrical fog is clearing from CRL's new gothic monstrosity. And Frankenstein lopes on to the computer screen.

Keen to make the most of its success with Dracula **the adventure game – 15 certificate, digitised pictures and all – the company's re-employed author Rod Pike to turn Mary Shelley's classic novel, not the Hollywood films, into a game.**

Frankenstein, **that's Doctor and not Professor as CRL would have us news hounds believe, is in three parts (make up your own jokes but don't send them here).** ***Loads*** **1 and 2 tell of the Doctor's search for the monster, and can be loaded without the need for secret code words.** ***Load*** **3, however, is something else and you can only get through to it once you've completed the rest of the adventure. It tells the monster's tale, why it kills and how it feels rejected by the rest of humanity. Rod Pike says: "I wanted to get the atmosphere and pathos of Mary Shelley's novel rather than the gore of the Hammer films." Part 3 of the game'll make you feel so sorry for the poor beast and you'll wish you hadn't killed it.**

Rod's monster is a beautiful creature, in a skeletal sort of way. Rod explains: "I see the creature as something to be pitied, as a human being who doesn't understand why he's being treated so badly. There are no bolts through his neck."

He's gathered inspiration for the adventure from a number of sources, but mainly from the TV documentary shown on BBC1 several months ago. He says: "There's one scene in particular near the end of the play which sums up my monster. It's when Dr Frankenstein and the monster are



Close your eyes. What do you long for, apart from being rid of those funny swimmy blotches? Yep, more places to buy your software. After all, it could mean less far to walk and that'd be a serious advantage. Anyhow, Woolworths has now joined W H Smith and Boots in stocking the full Top 30 titles. Until recently only a comparitively small number of the chain's stores carried just Mastertronic budget titles and a few Commodore and Atari (ttth...ting) packages. All that's now changed. The full Top 30 will go into more than 70 Woolworth's stores while budget titles will be sold in 196 of its shops up and down the land. Seems like a good development.

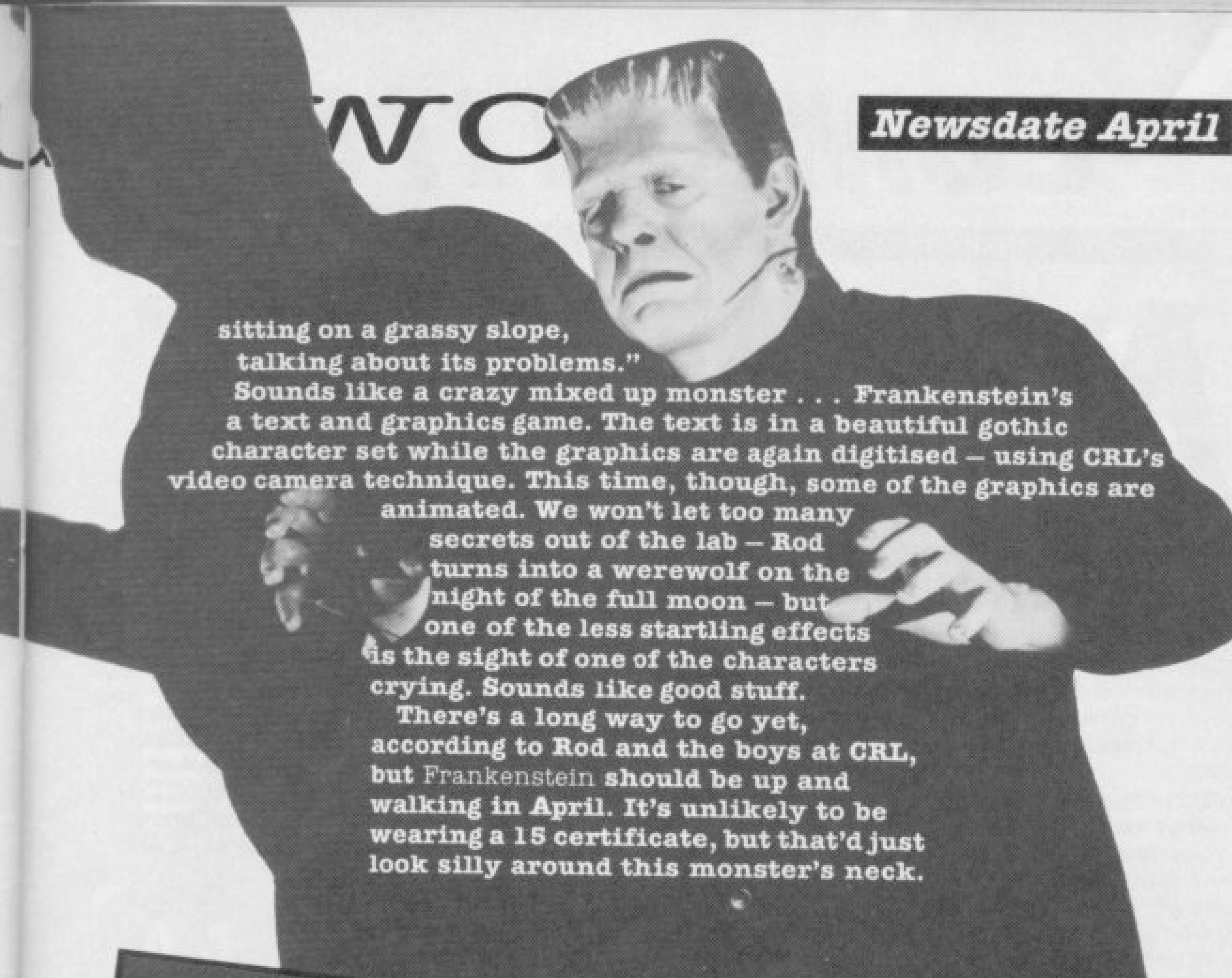
Yet another way for new 128K+2 owners to sell their old Spectrums. Put it up for auction. Equally if you're looking for some new hardware. MCD Computer Auctions is organising a series of computer sales in Berkshire... Many of the lots on offer, ranging from 48K Spectrums to classy mainframe machines, are liquidated stock, ex-demonstration equipment or 'As-new' computers from individuals. If you'd like to sell any equipment or receive the latest sale catalogue – priced £1.00 plus p and p – contact Derek Telfer at MCD Computer Auctions, Wilburn House, London Road, Sunningdale, Berks, SL5 0ER, or call him on (0990) 23002. Could do you a deal...



Shake, rattle and roll. An outfit called Keep Publishing has launched a new fortnightly music magazine on tape. What's this got to do with the Spectrum? Quite a lot, actually. No, there 're few audio tracks on it, but it *Loads* into your Spectrum to display page upon well-laid-out page of pop and rock charts, info on the music scene and the scandalous stories behind life on the road. It'll also soon include items on computer games, films, fashion and broadcasting. *Shake* costs just £1.99 available by post only from Keep Publishing, Epic House, Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 3SH.

You've got to draw the line somewhere. And now even 128K+2 owners can – with a new version of Trojan's light pen. The pen straps on to the machine's back port and is supported by a graphics package, similar to Rainbird's **Art Studio**. The package'll allow you to draw freehand, create geometrical shapes, fill shapes using colour or texture, and move images around the screen. The pen and its software is priced at £19.95 and is obtainable – if you wish – from Computer Covers, Freepost, London, W5 1AQ

CRL's got the rights to *The Blues Brothers*, the side-splitting blues adventure starring John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd. John Belushi's just come out of prison and both brothers want to do some good in the world. They find that a local mission has run into financial trouble and are convinced they want to raise money for the nuns. The game's about their trials and tribulations on the path to musical success. CRL says that the game'll be in the strategy/arcade mode but its still at storyboard stage and unlikely to hit the high streets before the autumn. And if you haven't seen the film, DO. Never in the field of film making have so many police cars been needlessly written off . . . for nothing

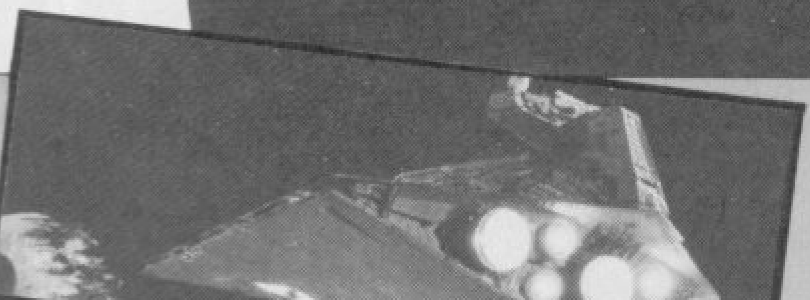


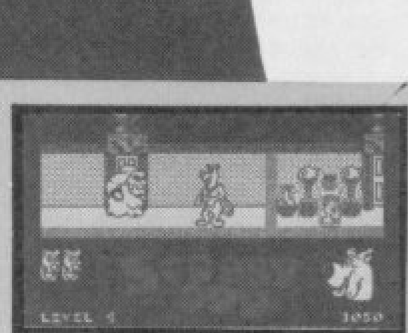
Newsdate April

sitting on a grassy slope, talking about its problems."

Sounds like a crazy mixed up monster . . . Frankenstein's a text and graphics game. The text is in a beautiful gothic character set while the graphics are again digitised – using CRL's video camera technique. This time, though, some of the graphics are animated. We won't let too many secrets out of the lab – Rod turns into a werewolf on the night of the full moon – but one of the less startling effects is the sight of one of the characters crying. Sounds like good stuff.

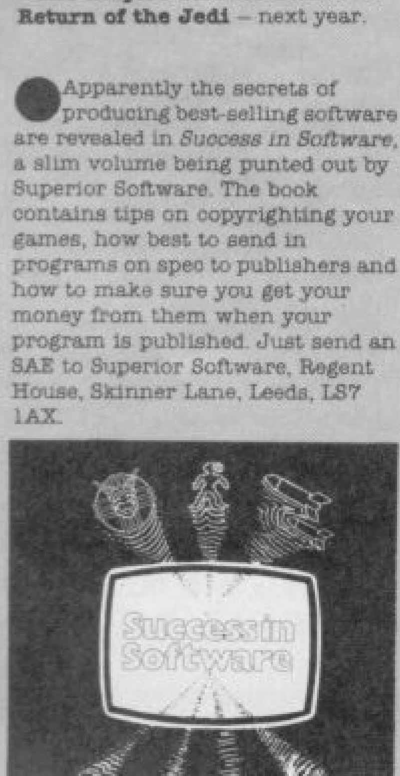
There's a long way to go yet, according to Rod and the boys at CRL, but Frankenstein should be up and walking in April. It's unlikely to be wearing a 15 certificate, but that'd just look silly around this monster's neck.





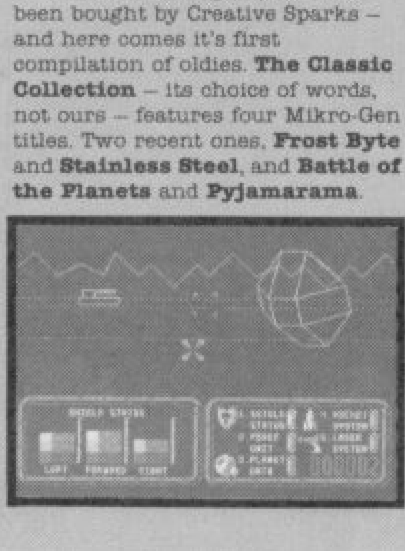
How many of the **Star Wars** movies have you seen? Do we care? (Well, yes actually, they were quite good and generally well worth seeing). No matter. The thing is Domark has forked out the (sh) reddies and got the rights to the three Atari coin-op games based on the films: **Star Wars**, **The Empire Strikes Back**, and **Return of the Jedi**. It's another notorious mega-licence but don't worry. Real Time Software – which did 3D **Star Glider** – is tipped to do the conversion so it could be real snappy vector graphics effort with sound and speech enhancements for the 128 machines. **Star Wars**, the game, is likely to appear on the Domark label in September, to be followed by the other Atari licences – **The Empire Strikes Back** and **Return of the Jedi** – next year.

Apparently the secrets of producing best-selling software are revealed in *Success in Software*, a slim volume being punted out by Superior Software. The book contains tips on copyrighting your games, how best to send in programs on spec to publishers and how to make sure you get your money from them when your program is published. Just send an SAE to Superior Software, Regent House, Skinner Lane, Leeds, LS7 1AX.



How are you at doing your own computer graphics? Terrible? So are we. However, now you can be a walking disaster. Underware – and here I kid you not – will transfer you computer generated immages on to the T-shirt of your choice. All you need is some graphics to dump, an Epson compatible printer, and the special Underware (!!) ribbon. You simply dump your image on to print-out paper using the special ribbon, and then use a hot iron to transfer the image from the paper on to the garment of your choice. Simple but expensive. A black ribbon will set you back £15. Coloured ones are £23. All the info from Banbury Business Computers, 3 Schofields Way, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4NS. Still, it could get quite nifty if you could dump out screens for **Fist II** or **Shadow Skimmer** on to your chest...

Mikro-Gen has hardly had time to put up the notice 'Under New Management' – it's been bought by Creative Sparks – and here comes it's first compilation of oldies. **The Classic Collection** – its choice of words, not ours – features four Mikro-Gen titles. Two recent ones, **Frost Byte** and **Stainless Steel**, and **Battle of the Planets** and **Pyjamarama**.



Elite is launching a new compilation of seven games called the **6-Pak**. Now that in itself is pretty remarkable. Even a smidgen more peculiar is that the seventh game is **Duet** – Elite's much-rumoured, but so far unreleased, **Gauntlet** look-alike. Presumably its appearance on the **6-Pak** means Elite reckons it has missed the **Gauntlet** boat and is using it to perk up a golden oldies tape. (Q: What is better than a six-game compilation tape with six old games on it? A: A seven-pack tape with six old games on it and one tantalisingly tempting as-yet unreleased track). Who says the software industry doesn't filtch ideas from the music biz? For the record, the other six titles on this £9.95 tape are: **Jet Set Willy II** (Software Projects), **Fighting Warrior** (Melbourne House), **Scooby Doo** (Elite), **Sacred Armour of Antiriad** (Palace), **Split Personalities** (Domark), and **1942** (Elite). And, horrors, it's actually very, very good value. Ol' Steve up at Elite knows a bargain when he sees one, and so do we.

Marketing execs – those guys 'n' gals with Filofaxes and BMWs – have a lot to answer for. 'So you've had a hit', they say. 'My advice, and it'll cost you, is to do it again'. Well, Elite and Gremlin have both been particularly innovative. Elite is working on **Ghosts 'n' Goblins II** and **Commando II** (hot on the heels of **Bomb Jack II**) and Gremlin is putting together **Jack the Nipper II** and **Thing on a Spring II**. Elite and Gremlin obviously find new ideas a trifle difficult.

TWTMTW
THAT WAS THE MONTH THAT WAS

More rumblings with the Plus 3. Brentwood supremo, Al Sugar is pressing ahead with plans for his disc-based Spectrum.

On February 23 Amstrad gathered together representatives from twelve of the most trusted (by Amstrad) of the independent software houses to unveil details of the machine.

The event, which should have been quite exciting, was actually rather a waste of time. Mainly because Amstrad chose to reveal precious little more than that which had already appeared in the pages of this mag.

The machine is apparently now scheduled for a launch in late summer at a price – according to Sugar himself – of 'over £200'. Which sounds a lot like £229.95 – one of those 'magic' prices.

The blank discs will come down in price to somewhere just over a pound a shot, mainly because Amstrad has around seven million of the things currently sitting in its warehouse looking for a home. Commercial software titles on discs, however, will truely be the micro equivalent of CDs, retailing at somewhere around £12-15 – although for that money you'd expect to get a bigger-than-48K game.

Really the only sticking point is the £200+ price.

If the Plus 3 is to be as meggasuccessful as this year's model – Amstrad is claiming 300,000 128K+ 2s sold already!! – it has to cost under £199.

Over £200! Pah! Think again Amstrad . . .

SINCLAIR USER COMPETITION

WINNERS

At the most recent Microfair, innocent passing strangers were accosted by the members of SU team and forced to fill out a card. The card was yet another SU comp in disguise. You had to see if you could rate a series of game Top Gun (★★★), Tarzan (★★★★), Druid (★★★★★), World Cup Carnival (★), Virgin Challenger (★★)and Uridium (★★★★★ Classic) and see if your rating could match the original

SU review rating. The idea was that you did it by pure judgement alone but the more astute simply looked up their old copies of the magazine. Scoundrels.

Prize for the first correct ten entries picked out of a car boot is **Short Circuit**, *game of the film from Ocean. The ten lucky winners are K Jeffery of Dagenham, P Johnson of Elstead, T Evans of London, Richard Lunn of Rainham, Bill McNeill of Rainham, Peter Raggett of um Rainham (It isn't a fix honest...). Sam Mahlane of London, M Johnson of Slough, Roy Ward of Oh God Rainham and J Burton of Wigan. Copies of the game will be dispatch as soon as you can say 'Has the post gone yet'.*

TOP GUN

Very popular this compo, but that's not surprising as it featured Kelly McGillis and Tom Cruise – the film not the questions. The answer, below, was a hit and miss affair, but we'll have given you top marks if put your mark in the shaded part of the sky. Anyone who put the 'plane near the ground loses marks for a crash.

The first prize winner, **J Tedgold of Florence Road, Brighton,** gets an all expenses paid trip to a British Aerospace flight simulator in Herfordshire.

The fifty runners' up prizes, of those fabulous *Top Gun* games from high flying Ocean go to:

Darren Radley, Maylandsea, Essex, CM3 64Q; Robert Batchelder, Woodloes Park, Warwick, Warwickshire; Christian Lewis, Tonbridge, Kent; Paul Waters, Sneinton, Nottingham; Andrew Cordiner, Fishcross, Clackmannanshire, Scotland; Rod Shaw, Lodger Lane, Nailsea, Avon; Mr C N Robinson, Romford, Essex, RM7 7Af; Mr S Lucas, Sankey, Mr Warrington, Cheshire; Derek Jenkins, LLawishen, Cardiff, CF4; G Relshaw, c/o SSG Belshaw, Tm Troop BEPO 58; Matthew Johnstone, Terrygowan Cottage, Aherdeenshire, Scotland; Tony Beavis, Galleywood Chelmsford, Essex, CM2; Barry Loncoln, Northern Ireland, Training Est, Brercorn Barrack BFPQ 505; M Wisbey Willesborough, Ashford, Kent TN24; Philip Fletcher, Heathfield East Sussex, TN21; Fordley, Chamlington, Tyne & Wear, NE23; Stephen Henson, Woolston, Southampton, Hants, S02 7GN; Mr B P Rogers, Forest Hill, London, SE23 1AF; Marc Seenan, Carluke, Lanarkshire, Scotland; Matthew Hall, Sandbank House, Heywood, Lancs, OL10; Scott Denyer, Corringham, Essex, SS17; David Vincent, Herts, WD4; Patrick Wallace, Sheffield, S11; A Meek, Cramlington, Northamberland, NE23; Marc Whittingham, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset, BH12; Jason Murphy, Naury Co Down, N Ireland, BT35; J Murray, Abington



Vale, Northampton, NN3; Sam Roads, Southwoodford, London, E18; Stephen A Blower, South Yorkshire, S8; Paul Rowe, Treeton, Rotherham, South Yorkshire; P Chessman, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7; Andrew Ridley, Staithes Saltburn, Cleveland, TS13 5AN; David Godsall, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NG10; Gavin Thornton, Waveny Hill, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32; Paul Newell, Bubery, Birmingham B45; Peter Harrison, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs; Jonathan Finn, South Wales CF6; Paul Sruoga, Coleshill, Birmingham; Ian Green, Sheffield S47, South Yorks; J Hobbs, Wyke Rogis, Weymouth, Dorset FT4; Richard Sefton, Comber, Co Down North Ireland; Mark Warner, Hengrove, Bristol, Avon, BS14; Alex Mallinson, Charltonstores, Charlton, Worcs, WR10; Mr Adrian Platts, Whittington Moor, Chesterfield, Derbyshire; Paul Snowdon, South Woodford, London, 18; Matthew Hobbs, Camberley, Surrey, GU15; Lee Kirkan, Sainton, Manchester, Hanes, M27; Mr S Telford, 153 Broombankterrace, Edinburgh, EH12; Wayne Styles, Sutton Est, Salford,'Machester; Gareth Lewis, Riddish, Stocilport, Cheshire, SJ5 6QA.

A further 25 lucky third prize winners get the chart topping soundtrack from the film with at least two single hits to its credit. They are; Michael Follen, 46 Lancaster Crescent, Downham Market, Norfolk, PE38; Mr C Brett, 15 Church Mews, Hatton, Nr Berby, DE6 5DP; David P Elliott, 39 St Nicholas Street, Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 4EH; Alistair Scott, Edinburgh, Scotland EH12; P Birton, Ftiors Cliff, Christchurch, Dorset; Matthew Jackson, Worsley, Manchester, M28; Colin Andrew Godfrey, The Gables, Rowdson, Dorset DT1 3XZ; SP Evans, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6HR; Mike Watson, Darwen Lancs, BB3 3AJ; Charlotte Chipchase, Oxford Ox 4; Paul Townshend, Cookham, Maindenhead, Berkshire SL6; David Allen, Caterham, Surrey, CR3; Alan Dexter, South Anston, Nr Sheffield, South Yorks, S31; Christopher Rolland, Rushington, West Sussex, BN16; Stuart Rothwell, Blackfell, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE37; M Hulse, Ashton Under Lyne, Lancashire, OL6; SP Kelly, Paddock, Huddersfield, HD3 HEP; Christopher O'Reilly, Erdington, Birmingham B23; Andrew Patrick, Colby Castletown, Isle of Man; Mr A J Bruce, Northole, Middx UB5; John Povall, Eaton Ford, St Neots, Cambs PE19; Christopher Hill, Lesburn 60, Antrum, N1 BT27; Philip Shieber, RAF Wethersfield, Braintree, Essex, CM7; Richard Godsden, Merseyside, MA11; Richard Payne, Middlesbrough, Cleveland.

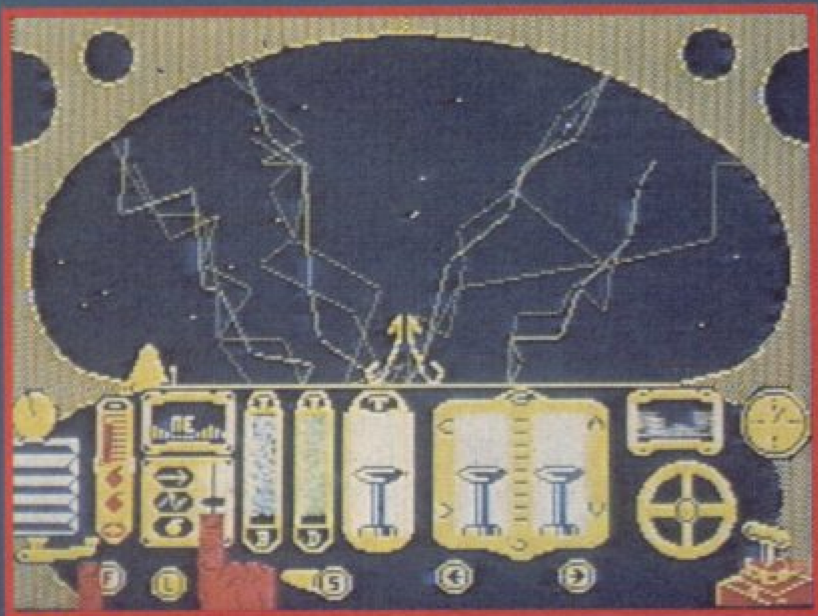
MURDER OFF MIAMI COMPO

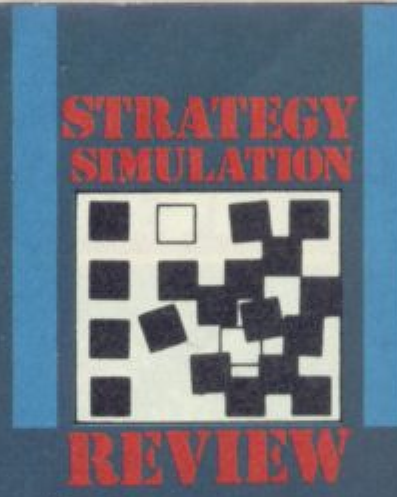
Most of your would make great detectives – probably – but the answer to our murderous conundrum was Soames. There were six clues and his was the only six letter name.

First winner was **Mr A J Bruce, Northholt, Middx** who gets to go on our Murder Weekend. The 20 runners get a copy of Dennis Wheatley's **Murder Off Miami,** from CRL. They are:

Glen Skinner, Kingston Par, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE3; James McMullen, Grange, Cork, Ireland; Steven Lea, Lisson Green Est, London, NW8; Paul Lloyd-Holt, Deane, Bolton, BL35, Lancs; Brendan Deulin, Co Tyrone, N.Ireland; G McCree, Lancs, HA30, Ayrshire; Alistair Mat, Moray, Scotland, IV30; Mark Graham, Heyham, Northumberland, NE46; James Burton, Christchurch, Dorset; A Dodd, Edgeware, Middx, HA8; Andrew Watson, Woodthorpe, York, YD2; A Lang, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 8SH; Mr P Robinson, Trimley St Mary, Nr Ipswich, Suffolk, IP10; Darren Turner, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 8GB; Tom McKernan, Enniskillen, Co Hirmanagh, N1 BT74; David Broomfield, Great Sankey Warrington, WAE 17; Chris Neil, Greenhow, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 4SQ; Marc Staniszewski, Kidderminster, Worcs DY10; John Studholme, West Yorkshire, BD7 2PP; Julian Scott, Smarden, Nr Ashford, Kent, TN27.

TERROR OF THE DEEP





Meet the devils of the deep blue sea – well Scottish Loch, anyway – in Mirrorsoft's latest software vehicle.

It's set at the close of the 19th century when Victorians first looked to the skies and saw weird UFO's and to the seas where wee timerous beasties, such as Nessie, hid in the black depths.

What's the connection between Nessie and UFO's? Well, according to eye-witness reports, a large number of meteorite-like objects have fallen from the skies above Loch Ness. These hunks of molten rock brought strange creatures to the loch's surface which threatened the local fishermen and may have had an adverse effect on the monster itself. She hasn't been seen for a while and you've got the opportunity to investigate these happ'nin's.

It's an insane escapade. An eccentric Scottish engineer who lives close to the Loch has agreed to lend you his new fangled bathosphere – a sort of early submarine – to take a dip in the deep.

If you're still willing to investigate climb aboard the craft, select your drop place within the loch using the cursor pointer on the map – all mod cons here – and switch to dive mode.

The main, submersible, screen displays a bewildering array of switches, sticks, dials and indicators. The cassette insert says 'by dint of logic you deduce what they are...' Logic? You need to be a minor genius to work out which instrument does what within the cramped display. Admittedly, Mirrorsoft has provided information about the controls – left to right – but they're not easily memorised and, when you're under attack from horny-eared toad creatures, you're not likely to have time to glance from the screen to your scrap of highly glossy insert.

If you hang around too long in one place you'll be attacked by puny-looking yellow monsters. The best way to avoid them is to dive, but remember that you'll constantly need to keep the oxygen pumping and keep supplies and weapons coming down more frequently by using the Klaxon a specified number of times.

As you go deeper all the supply problems get more serious.

Also, as you sink, the monsters get larger and more dangerous. At first they look like harmless guppies but soon you start to get bug-eyed creatures which would be at home in an Ultimate game and many-tentacled terrors which glide up from the bottom of the sea window. They'll approach from more than one direction so when you hear the banging on the hull, move your vantage point around to find where the destruction's about to occur.

Talking of banging noises, there's a 128K/+2 version of the game on Side 2 of the tape. It includes some very nifty sort-of-sampled sound. The oxygen pumps thud and hiss, water bubbles around the sub, and the weapons – of course you'd have some means of self defence even in this tub – make all sorts of zinging and kat-chowing noises.

The three types of weapon you've got are spears, which are singularly ineffective, an electrical field which drains energy if used too much, and a bomb. The bomb's the most impressive weapon – it makes the most noise – but you've got to drop it, prime it and, when you've escaped, detonate it. Not something I wanted to do an awful lot.

OK, I admit it. While I was turned on by this game's unique mode of transport at the start I floundered a bit with the controls and soon became bored with the oh-so-similar monsters. Although some of the monsters were pretty big, I longed for a shoot 'em up I could really get my teeth into.

If you've got the odd half a day, you like watching bubbles gurgle up the screen and enjoy shooting things now and again – and it's very now...and...again – you'll give this your own Classic. Me? I just couldn't■

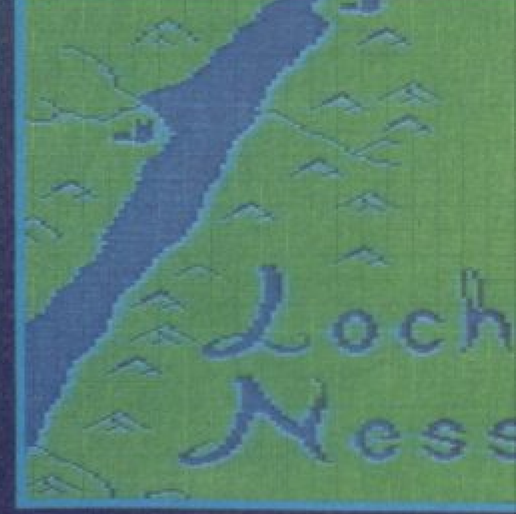
FACTS BOX

Hair raisingly eerie at first, but the monsters soon appear. Complex underwater simulation which ultimately became dull

TERROR OF THE DEEP
Label: Mirrorsoft
Price: £9.95
Author: Mr Micro
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K (enhanced)

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★☆



SOFTWARE STAR RATINGS

All software reviews carry a star rating, the basis of which is value for money programming, graphics, speed, speech and sound presentation and addictiveness

★★★★★
Solid gold. Buy it

★★★★☆
Well worth the folding stuff

★★★☆☆
Pretty average

★★☆☆☆
Very poor. Probably over-priced too

★☆☆☆☆
A total rip-off. Complain loudly



Each review carries an icon which shows the type of software.

Arcade is for animated games, which in general, reduce the life span of your joysticks.

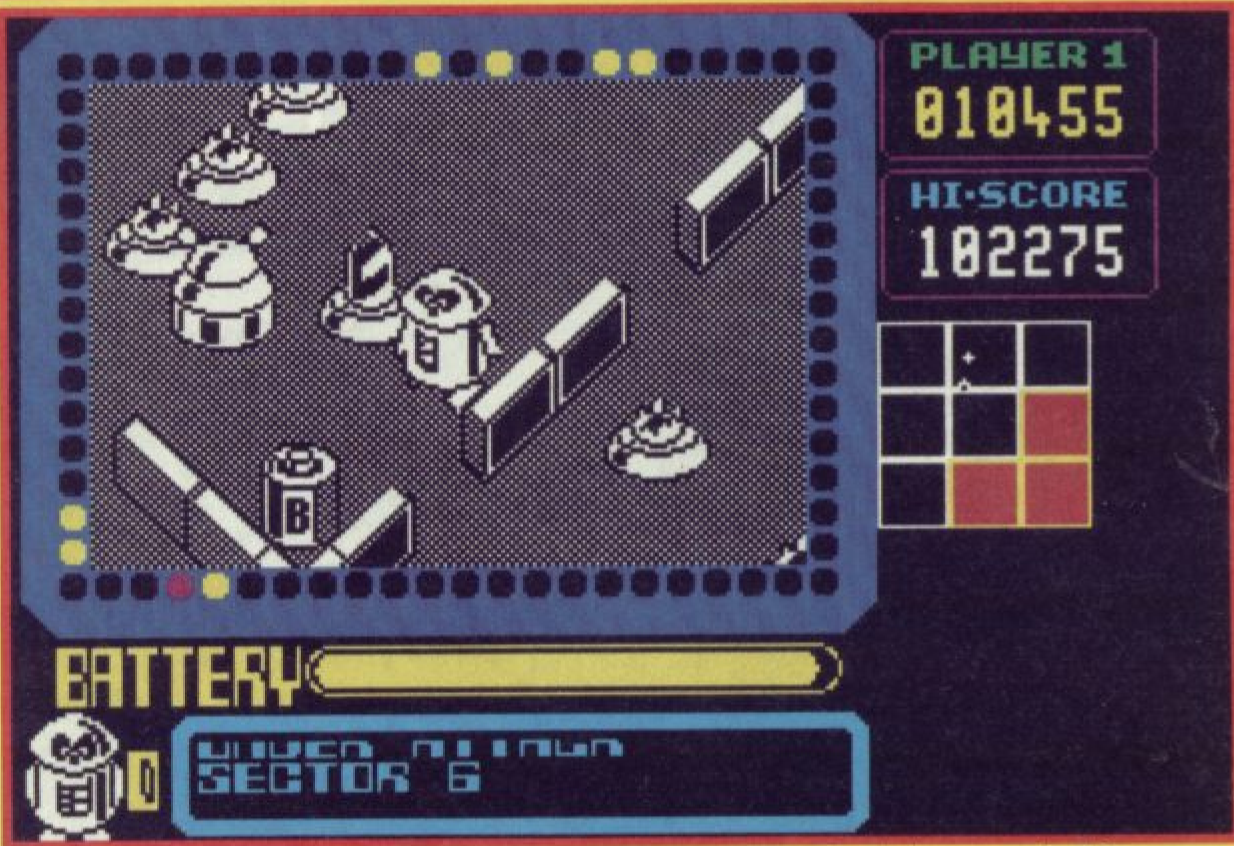
Toolkit covers programming utilities which improve the quality of home-made software or packages which make machine code easier to write.

Work Out, software which can be used in the home, such as car maintenance or home finance.

Strategy and Simulation are games where thought, planning and judgement are the principle skills required.

Adventure includes either graphic or text adventures.

MARTIANOIDS



FACTS BOX

Ultimate reverses drive for this comeback. The graphics contain few innovations but it's the plot that scores

MARTIANOIDS
Label: Ultimate
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★★

So many people have released Ultimate 3D graphics clones that, when I saw **Martianoids**, the company's first release for more than a year, I thought 'oh no not another one of *them*!'

Not so, though. The graphics are almost the same as Ultimate's other offerings, but the perspective's sharper and the play is more varied. You control a very unconvincing, cylinderical robot which is armed with gas spray and laser zap guns.

Your massive space ship *The Markon Dawn* has been invaded by aliens, innovatively called **Martianoids**, intent on destroying the master computer and, like a swarm of wasps create an environment in which they can live. The only way they can destroy the computer is by eliminating its lines of communication and halting the flow of programs from each sector of the ship to the main processor.

Your robot's main tasks are to collect batteries for energy, protect all sectors, and act as guard for each fluttering program as it floats towards its pyramidal sector processor. Once each program reaches its pyramid the sector's activated and the automatic defences start to destroy the aliens.

It's not an easy job because the aliens rip up the program path rods—which look like revolving barbershop poles—out of their holes and dump them. You can scoop four up at a time, then you've got to find empty holes and slot the poles back into them. Once all the holes— and poles—are working, the program can get home and all is sweetness and light for that sector.

Sectors

You start in the central sector square, shown on the map at the side of the screen. Robbie the robot is shown as a blip on that display, the program is shown as another blip. Go find the processor pyramid then meet up with the program and nudge it towards its destination.

If a sector square starts to flash red and yellow it's under attack drop everything and rush to its defence. When you've killed a few aliens and replaced a few poles the emergency red stops flashing and you can go back to work on your other sector.

Once you've finished the clean up job on one sector its square turns white and the message window at the bottom of the screen informs you which sector you'd better hit next.

Martians in disguise

Where have I seen them before? I could be one of the early Dr

Sigma 7

FACTS BOX

Really quite nice. Good graphics and varied game-play make it well worth the cash. Could lack addictiveness

SIGMA 7
Label: Durell
Author: in-house
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★☆

Sigma 7 is really rather good. It looks a little like **Zaxxon** (brilliant semi-3D arcade game) but then goes on to reveal original and entertaining sections.

There isn't much sign of a strong plot-line, but the pleasing gameplay and attractive graphics make up for this.

Sigma 7 is split into three sub-plots, each with a different aim.

At the start (Stage 1) your little space craft can be seen launching off from an impressive mothership and making a flightpath diagonally up the screen.

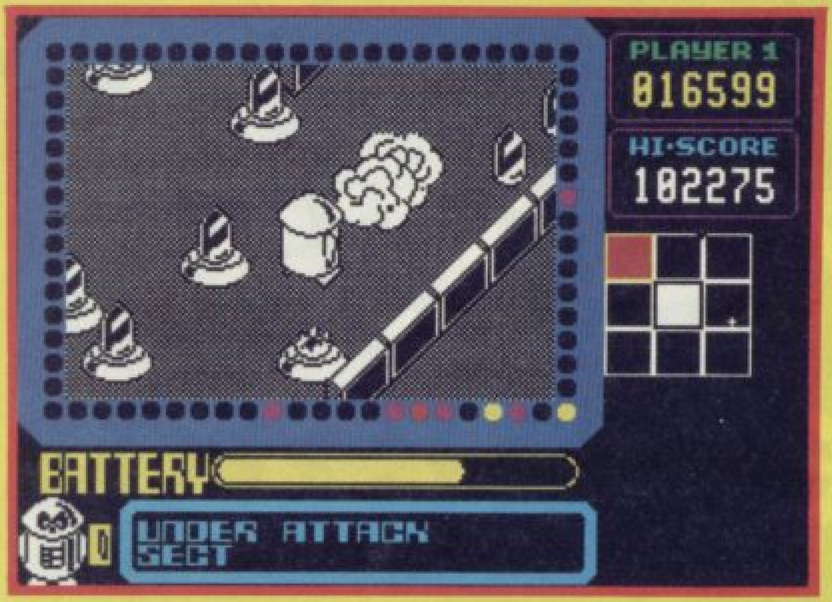
As soon as the mothership has moved off the screen and you are happily motoring away, on come screaming waves of green aliens that swirl and twirl all over the shop, making flying very hazardous indeed. The obvious solution is to bank left and right, wiping out the aliens as they appear. This is pretty easy to begin with, but soon gets tricky as more appear at a faster rate.

Once these are dispensed with (a fairly easy task on the first levels) another large construction will appear in the top right-hand corner of the screen and work it's way down.



Once you get to it, you'll find yourself on Stage 2 which is a little like **Pacman** in an odd sort of way.

You're in control of a tank-like vehicle which sits on a sort of griddy affair which – initially – has pathways littered with little coloured blobs. By guiding your tank over the pathways you pick up some of the blobs. Others will stay in place (and more of those in a minute). Hampering your progress by running into you are small square aliens that revolve and gang up on you if



Whos who's developed an attack of amnesia when he next encounters the Daleks. But I'm not, I am a reviewer who has discovered some old Ultimate aliens in a new game.

First you meet the dome-topped monsters who'll blast you with laser guns when you come within range. Very easy to deal with and you're assured of a high score if you forget about your task and blast, blast, blast at anything that moves.

The mechanical mice appear at the second stage of the game. They move faster than the domes—they're mice after all—and will drain your energy if they touch you.

Third level and enter the blobs, each with two bug eyes on stalks, swaying in the spatial vacuum. They move slower than the mice but bump and bash your energy away just the same. They also fire the occasional hazelnut cluster-shaped laser bombs which won't kill you off immediately but will cripple you.

Weapons

Your arsenal is composed of two types of weapon. The spray gun looks as if it's filled with acid and its range is limited. The robot puffs a huge cloud into the atmosphere and, hopefully, some of it will reach an alien: if it does the monster crumbles.

This spray is something new for Ultimate, which always used to rely on laser bolts. It's something of a technical innovation because, no matter which angle the robot is pointing at, the spray always shoots out as an extension in perfect perspective.

On occasion you'll need to blast away a section of wall and to do that you'll need the mega gun, activated using the keyboard. It destroys anything in it's path. So, if you want to get a battery trapped inside a wall be careful which part of the wall you destroy, or you'll lose the battery as well. Use the mega blaster sparingly, though, as—unlike the spray—it has a critical effect on your battery.

Ultimate's past glories

Jet Pac	**1983**	**Knightlore**	**1985**
Pssst	**1984**	**Underwurlde**	**1985**
TransAm	**1984**	**Alien 8**	**1985**
Lunar Jetman	**1984**	**Gunfright**	**1986**
Cookie	**1984**	**Pentagram**	**1986**
AticAtac	**1985**	**Cyberrun**	**1986**
Sabre Wulfe	**1985**	**Martianoids**	**1987**

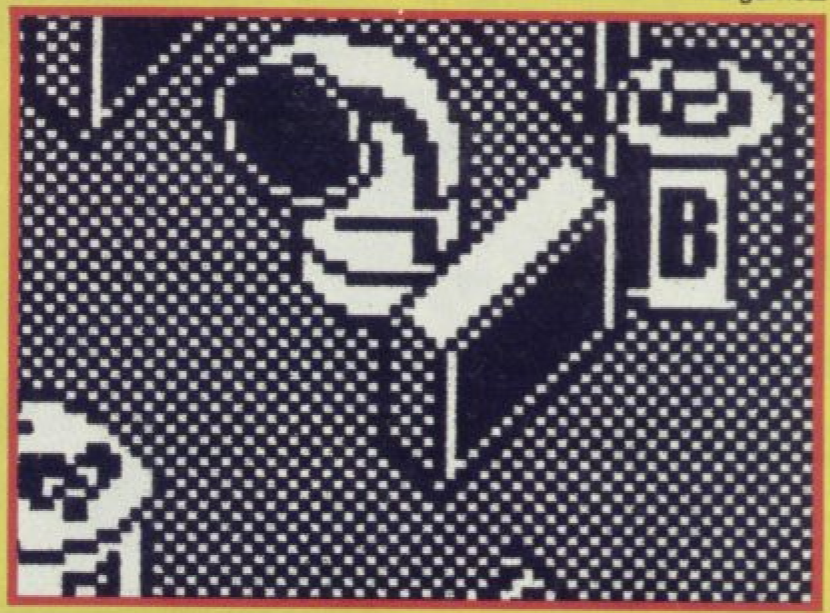
ARCADE REVIEW

Ultimate success

Martianoids will storm the charts for a number of very good reasons, although technically it's got little to recommend it. First, the plot has several strings to it. Just as you start to get bored with one set of aliens another set joins it and the action zips up. Also, the graphics are cleaner and in better perspective than the other Ultimate titles, a larger variety of curves, flats and textures have been used. Finally, the gameplay just... how can I put it... *feels* good

Ultimate is back in the game■





you're not careful.

Now, after you've collected all the blobs you'll be able to memorise the pattern of the immovable ones. And these will be used in Section 3. Once all the blobs have been eaten, you'll have to battle your way up to the top right of the screen, through all the aliens and on to the next section.

At this point a couple of comments about the graphics wouldn't be too out of place.

Although the 3D is all very nice thank you, there's rather too much attribute clash for my liking and, although it may look quite 'effective' when an alien is being blown to smithereens, we've now been shown that there are ways around the problem. (**Dandy, Shadow Skimmer** *et al*). Having said that, the aliens are all very well drawn and they explode in a cloud of smoke, which is a nice touch.

Anyway, back to the game. Section 3 is even stranger than the previous stage. What we have here is a sort of matrix of square buttons drifting in space with some peculiar plant objects floating around the outside. At this point you turn into an object closely resembling another planet of some sort. Here you must push down the buttons on the matrix in the pattern of the fixed dots on Sector 2. Complex eh? No, I didn't understand it either.

All the time you are heckled by something or other that looks a bit like a pyramid which goes around un-pressing all the buttons. It'll also kill you on contact and so is generally to be avoided.

Then once you've completed this bit you go all the way back to the beginning and start again, although the aliens are more unpleasant and things are a bit tougher around ■



Happy Days are here again!



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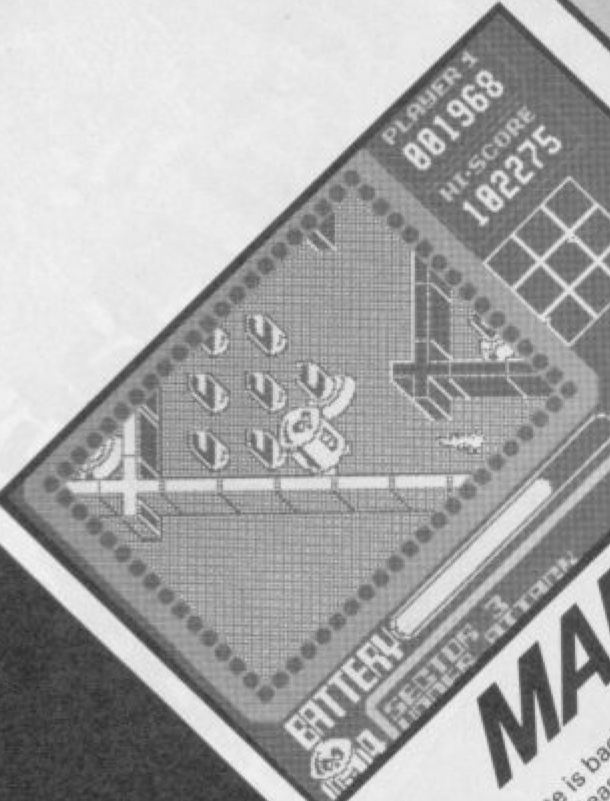
Trivial Pursuit is available on:
Spectrum, CBM 64, Amstrad CPC range, Amstrad PCW, Atari 8 bit, BBC 'B' (and Master) and IBM.

HORN ABBOT INTERNATIONAL

DOMARK

SMASH OFFER

MARTIANOIDS



Ultimate is back! **Martianoids** is it's first release since **Pentagram** appeared to a mixed reception nearly a year ago, and it's pretty wonderful.

In view of such an important occasion, the goodly people at US Gold have come up trumps and can offer (exclusively through SU of course) you a rather special deal.

Now, anyone who has bought the last few issues (if not, why not?) will know all about our totally fantastic Smash Offer Coupons. It would have been nigh-on impossible to miss the little cut-out rectangles which entitle you to staggering amounts of money off the finest games reviewed in each issue.

If this is the first time you've bought an issue in the past few months then you really couldn't have picked a better issue to start reading again. **Martianoids** is certainly going to be in demand from the moment it reaches the shelves.

Now, why run the risk of being disappointed by being told that your local software emporium has sold-out? Sounds like a pretty silly idea to us, especially as we can offer you £1 off the price of the game.

There's no gambling involved. No lucky dip. Just send the coupon to the address indicated and a copy of **Martianoids** will be falling through your letter box before you know it. And just in case you want confirmation that your money would be wisely spent, check out the review on Page 24.



MARTIANOIDS MARTIANOIDS MARTIANOIDS MARTIANOIDS

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MARTIANOIDS

Send coupon to: Martianoids Smash Offer, US Gold, Unit 2/3 Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX, along with a cheque/postal order for £7.99 made payable to US Gold. Offer closes 30th April 1987.

GRANGE HILL





"Hello! I'm Ziltch, a lovable and entirely fictitious character invented in order to promote this fantastic offer in SU magazine. If you're a streetwise schoolkid like me, you'll not be wanting to throw around your pocket-money willy nilly. You're obviously pretty smart.

Take this example of a narrow scrape that I got into only the other day and you'll see what I mean. My Spectrum was running a little low on software. I hadn't bought a decent game in weeks. So, off I went to the local sweetie shop to try and find something worthwhile.

Well, obviously I spotted Grange Hill from Argus instantly. It has all the amazing features that a discerning games player could want. There are the wonderful graphics and innovative storyline. And of course, it's based on the very interesting adventures of two schoolkids, just like me.

Problem though: I'd only got £8.95 in my racing-car piggy-bank and the game usually cost £9.95. On the way home, though, I found and bought the latest issue of SU. The same issue as you are holding now. And what should I find on Page 27 but a coupon with which I can get £2.00 off the game. Well I'll be blowed. I've got just enough money. And a copy of SU to boot (or to read). I'll be sending off my coupon today. I suggest you do the same!"



SMASH OFFER

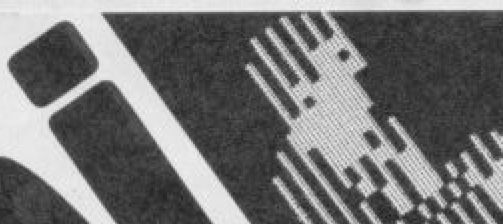
£2·00 OFF

SU SMASH OFFER

GRANGE HILL

Send coupon to: Grange Hill Smash Offer, Argus Press Software, B+L Ltd, Units 1-2, Conlon Developments, Watery Lane, Darwin, Lancs, along with a cheque/postal order for £7.95 made payable to Argus Press Software. Offer closes April 30th.

Uchi Mata





As someone who got pretty confused by the dozen or so possible moves in the original **Exploding Fist** (a kick in the legs sufficed for most purposes) the idea of playing Judo, with its subtle sequences of offensive and defensive moves seemed pretty daunting.

It was pretty shocking then to discover that the entire range of Judo moves had somehow been reduced to *Up, Down, Left, Right, Fire* in **UchiMata**—just out from Martech.

The reduced controls are pretty misleading though, as you soon discover. To begin with there are some peculiar aspects to playing the game. For one thing all attacking moves must be initiated when an indicator box lights up on the screen. All attacking moves must begin with a carefully timed grab, by pressing the **Fire** button. Just how successful your judo move turns out to be depends on just how firm a grip you get. And that depends on your timing of the **Fire** button stab. Begin to get the picture....

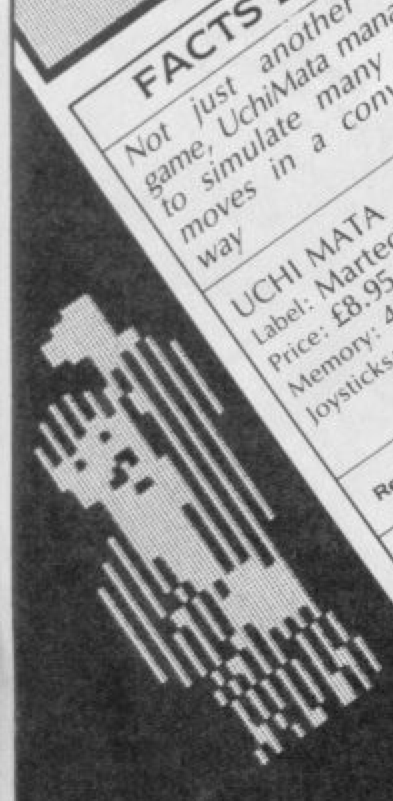
To Martech's credit, it has done its very best to make the joystick movements 'like' the actual on-screen moves they control. For example a simple (?) throw called a Tomoe-Nage where you throw yourself on to the mat and use the force to carry the opponent over the top is achieved by pressing the **Fire** button and pulling the joystick back (right in this case) and down. There is a useful practise mode where an opponent stands there obligingly waiting for you to throw him over your head. It takes a good ten minutes even to master the first four move sequences and it could have serious consequences for lesser joysticks, ie they may break into little pieces.



Scoring, like **Fist**, is not just a matter of win or lose. Even if you successfully perform a move you may get a poor score (for a particularly crummy but successful move). Defence is more difficult, certain kinds of twisting move may get you out of trouble but its really a question of working out what sort of attacking move your opponent is making and figuring out the most successful counter move. Technically then, **UchiMata** scores big points.

Graphically the game is clever, but some people are going to be disappointed. The two figures are black and white, with an illusion of grey created by a particularly simple kind of shading which makes it look as though the two opponents are wearing corduroy gis (a gi is the dressing gown thing they wear I'm told). They aren't incredibly detailed but they are animated very well and are called upon to tumble through the air at great speed.

It's a long term game this one. For a start there are moves not described in the manual and different kinds of defensive technique you can try. Later computer opponents can get very difficult to beat indeed so you'll need tons of practice.





FACTS BOX

Not just another Fist game, UchiMata manages to simulate many Judo moves in a convincing way

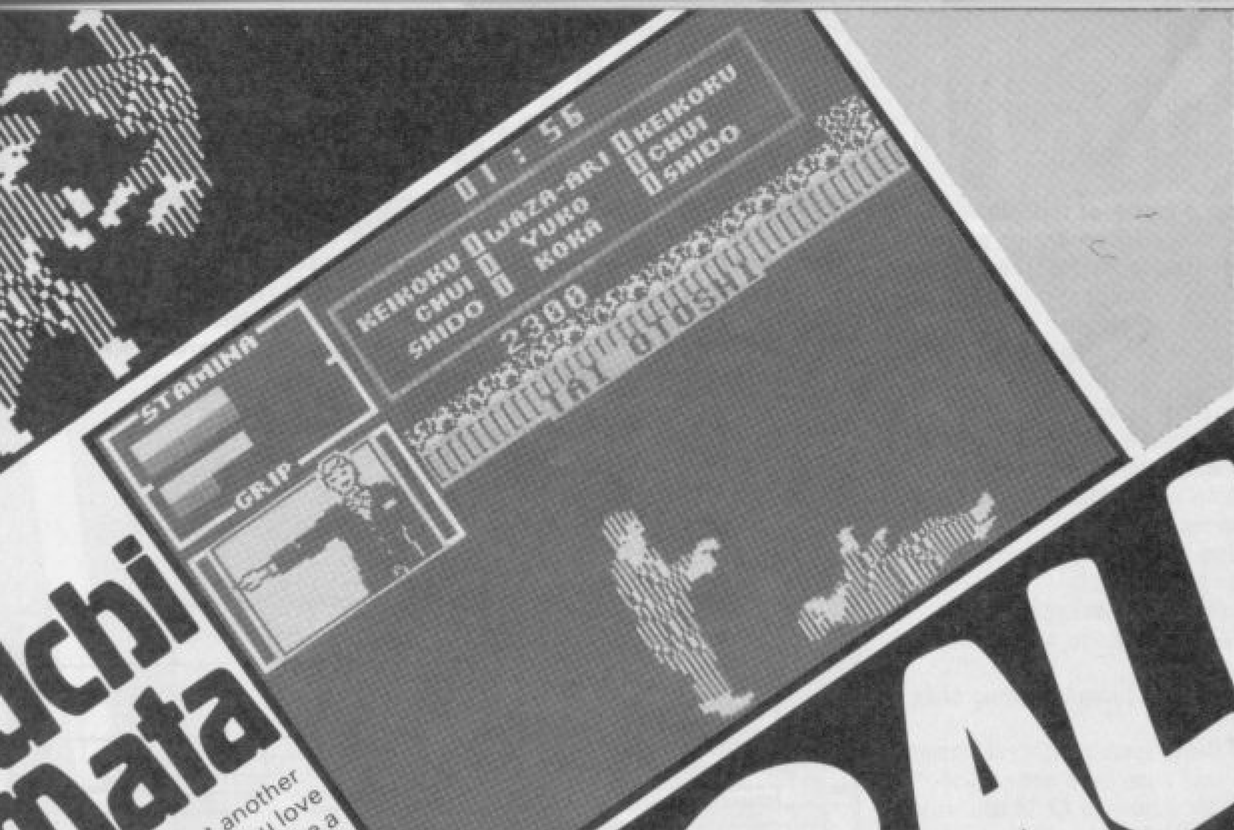
UCHI MATA
Label: Martech
Price: £8.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: Various

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★★☆

NAME MERTON MICK
AGE 35
HEIGHT 6 FT S
WEIGHT 193
STRENGTH
AGILITY
SPEED
PLAYER 1
PICK YOUR
GROUNDER

ARCADE ★ REVIEW

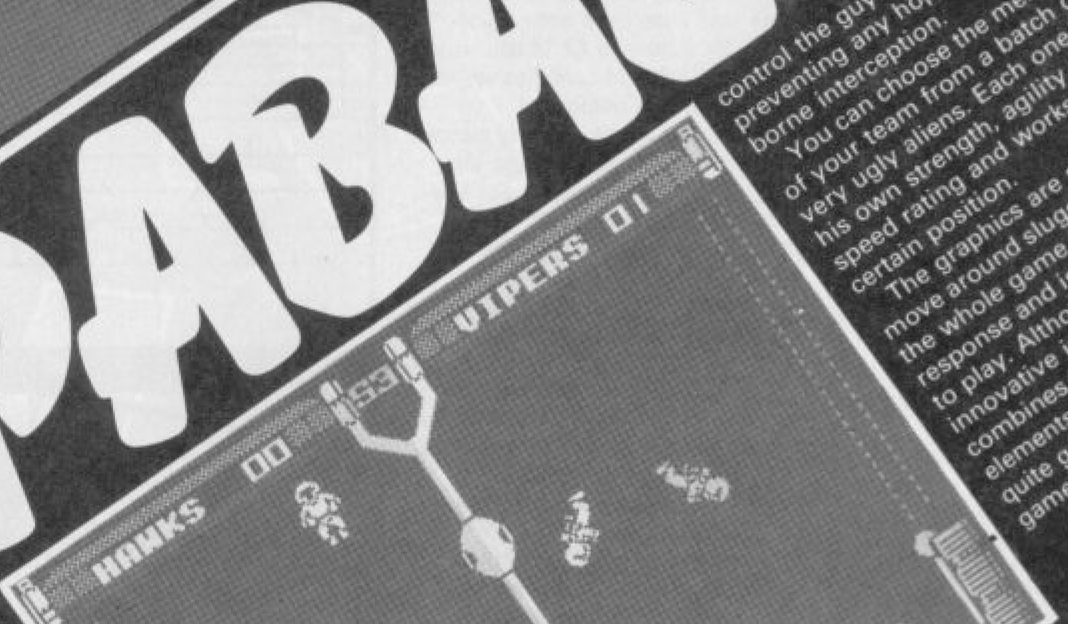


Uchi Mata

It definitely isn't just another **Fist** varient although, if you love those games, you should have a good time with this one.

As Judo throws go I'd give the game a Wazi-Ari which isn't a drunk asking you not to go but 7 points out of a possible ten■

HYPABALL



Hypaball is another in the futuristic-sports simulation group of programs that have been appearing recently. It combines elements of basketball, American football and volleyball. Unfortunately it doesn't quite live up to its ideas.

It's from the people at Odin who were most recently responsible for the critically acclaimed and reasonably successful **Heartland** unfortunately, an essentially good idea is marred by some uncomfortable playing options and other niggling problems.

In the future (it says here), only one sport will survive. It will have a huge following and it will be fast and dangerous and exciting. It will be played by two teams of three people.

Right. Here we hit the first snag. No-one has yet come up with a decent simultaneous two-player option on a fast arcade game. The main problem is that most people use a Kempston interface which instantly prohibits a second player joystick option, forcing your opponent to use the keys.

The fact that each player has to control three little men is even more awkward. There is no way for you to decide which man you wish to move. The computer will automatically default and give you control of the man nearest the ball. While this sounds sensible, it is, in fact, extremely tedious as you always end up controlling a man that you don't want to move.

Anyway, while you are busy wrestling with the controls you can get to grips with the basic idea of the game. The play area radiates from a pole with a large metal box which goes up and down. The box has a hole in it.

Now, the idea of the game is to pick up a bouncing ball and slam it into the box. Each team has one man on the ground and two in the air. The ball will launch from the box and whoever gets to it first makes the advantage. Futuristic eh?

While playing the computer, you realise that things are a bit unfair. Once the machine has control of the ball, it's almost impossible to get it back. When you don't have the ball in possession, the computer defaults to forcing you to control the guy on the ground, preventing any hope of air-borne interception.

You can choose the members of your team from a batch of very ugly aliens. Each one has his own strength, agility and speed rating and works best in certain position.

The graphics are simple and move around sluggishly. In fact, the whole game has very poor response and isn't very exciting to play. Although it's quite innovative in the way it combines different sporting elements, it never quite gells as a game■

FACTS BOX

Disappointing attempt at a future-sports sim. Some nice ideas negated by slow response. Mediocre

HYPABALL
Label: Odin
Author: in-house
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★☆☆



BACKGROUND NOISE

Background Noise looks behind the top games of the moment and speaks to the programmers who sweated blood to produce them. Background Noise looks from the author's point of view — at the particular programming problems and the way they were solved

SCALEXTRIC

by Jon Baldachin

The great thing about Scalextric is the way you build up your own racing circuits.

Obviously the computer version – the original design of which was done by Andrew Bradley – had to have the design-your-track option and what we tried to do was to follow the same shapes and track sections as the original Scalextric system from Hornby Hobbies.

The actual programming was done at Virgin by Andy and Mike.

All the planning was based on the actual scales used in the Scalextric track. The Scalextric scale is 1:552, ie one yard driven on-screen had to be equivalent to 552 yards on a real racing circuit. The tricky thing then was to translate this into a stretch of track viewed from the driver's-eye point of view. Based on this scale a large straight in the Hornby Scalextric set occupies 96 pixel lines (rasters) as viewed by the driver during the game. At that scale an average speed of 240 mph would take you round the Brands Hatch Circuit on the screen in approximately 39 seconds.

To simulate the track view ahead in perspective as accurately as possible, a system for drawing the track was devised using difference tables for each type of curve. These were applied to the current centre point of each pixel line of the track each time the car progressed down the track by one pixel line – ie approximately 6.5 feet. From the movement of the centre, each track edge point is adjusted to give the swing effect of entering and leaving a curve. For a tight curve the centre point of each horizontal pixel line of track plotted on screen is shifted left or right more than for a gentle curve.

The calculations for the difference tables were originally done on a Sinclair QL, simulating the curves and the edges to ensure that the view gave an accurate feel to the driver.

After a month of this planning stage, the program design proper was started in March. This was a functional specification which described the program in a series of block flow-diagrams in a top-down fashion.

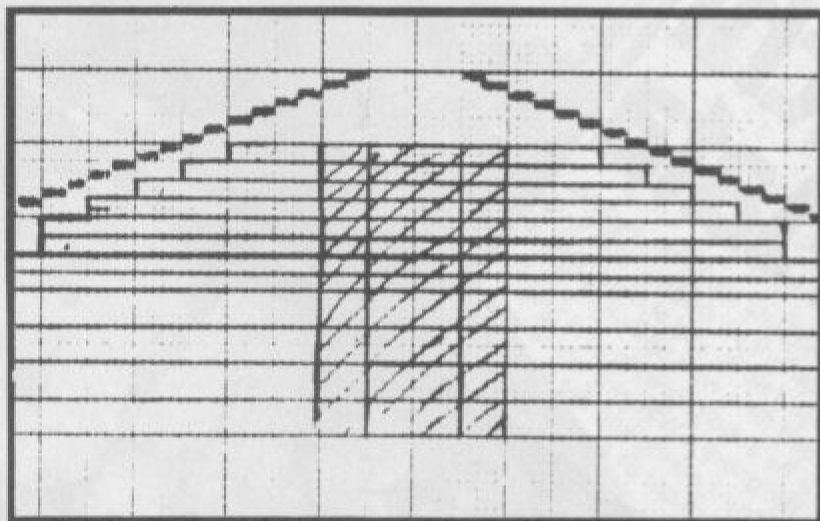
The programming was then started bottom-up and the program itself was split into sections – each one with a different purpose:

1) Timing control
2) Edge of track movement
3) Car movement
4) Scrolling top scenery
5) Side scenery and second car movement
6) Track design and drawing code

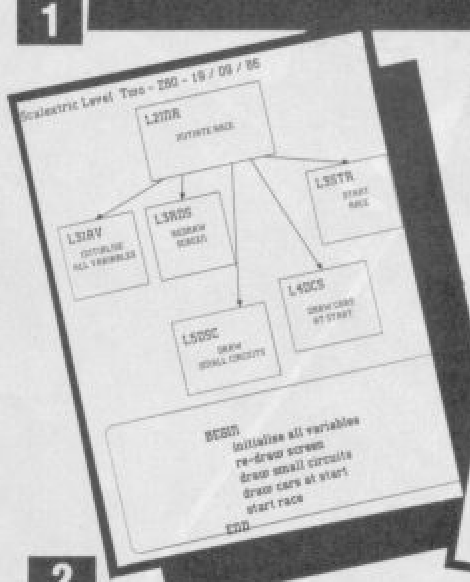
All the programming development work was done on a network of Apple IIe's running CP/M and using an Eicon cachenet hard disc system. We also used a number of programming tricks – mainly macros and conditional assembly so the program could be kept reasonably hardware independent for all Z80 processor based systems. We wanted to be able to take the Spectrum version and convert it to the Amstrad afterwards without too much hassle.

We decided to produce the program for the Spectrum 48K as the first version. The primary technical reason was market size and graphics considerations. We were doubtful about achieving performance and timing on the Amstrad in the various modes and felt that it would be easier to tune a working Spectrum program on to the Amstrad than to develop from scratch. Mike started the program and handed over to Andy in September 1986. Thereafter, Andy did most of the programming and Mike assisted. The last three weeks were an unbroken stretch of long hours and sleepless nights to meet the end of November deadline.

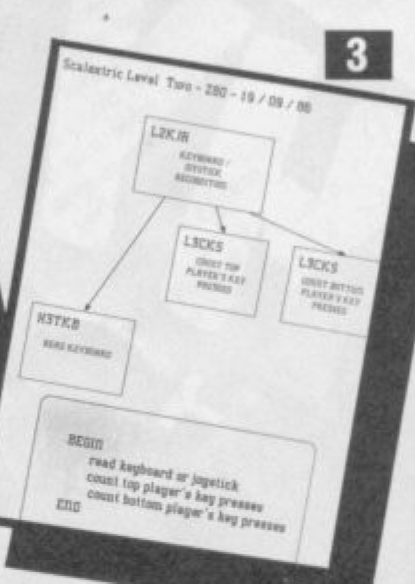
A landmark in source code documentation – for Virgin – was reached when Andy ran out of memory with the assembler on the Apples and had to split the program into three sections for later linkage. This document was produced during one 36 hour continuous stint and resulted in such merriment amongst the other programmers. This document is carefully preserved at Vernon Yard■



1



2



3

4



Jon Baldachin
DIRECTOR OF SOFTWARE, Virgin Games

Key to figures

1 Original track view (Andrew Bradley)
2 Program functional specification for graphics produced on Macintosh (Mike)
3 Program functional specification for player input produced on a Macintosh (Mike)
4 Original screen layout (Andrew Bradley)


Is This Really
Auf Wiedersehen Monty?
♪ Ah mole oh meeo ♪
Limited Edition
Just a few lines between continental heists and yet more hairy escapades to say hello to all my fans and invite you on my most exciting and exacting journey to date, a whistle stop tour of the capitals of Europe acquiring more than just the local scenery on the way.
Oops... must dash... gendarmes hot on my tail. Will write again soon with more news of my exhilarating escapades and growing booty bag.
Monty
MOLEDAVI
To
MONTY MOLE
FANS
EVERYWHERE
I wonder what's
LEN ROUGE'
Limited Edition
Fantastic full colour wall poster only 99p.
see pack for details. Poster free with every
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These squeaking windmoles are driving me mad!
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GREMLIN
Gremlin Graphics Software Limited, Alpha House,
10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423

INTO BATTLE!



Role Playing games computer games. Over the next couple of issues we're going to be getting pretty serious about them. As a taster of things to come Gary Rook kicks off with some of the basics. So just what is a role-playing game?



Gauntlet. Now there's a terrific coin-op machine. And a really good micro conversion – still at No2 in the charts this month. But the interesting thing about it –and not a lot of people know this – is many of its basic ideas have nothing to do with computer games at all. . .

They come instead from the world of role playing games (RPGs).

For most people that means *Dungeons and Dragons* – by far the most famous role-playing board game – even spawning an OKish cartoon.

Examples of ideas picked up from *D & D* and used by Gauntlet include combat based on strength and or magic ratings and the idea of players working in teams to defeat a common enemy rather than battling against one another.

Gauntlet is by no means the only game to pick up on role-playing ideas. Heavy on the Magick was heavily influenced by *D & D*. The Edge's soon-to-be-released title Warlock too uses some elements.

The original role-playing board games are considerably more sophisticated in their use of these ideas and make the micro versions look incredibly simplistic. *D & D* is, in fact so complex that it's no surprise that so far there hasn't been one really satisfactory translation of RPG ideas across to a micro – at least certainly not on the Spectrum. In the US however there have been some moderately successful adaptations which have appeared on disc for the IBM PC or Apple machines.

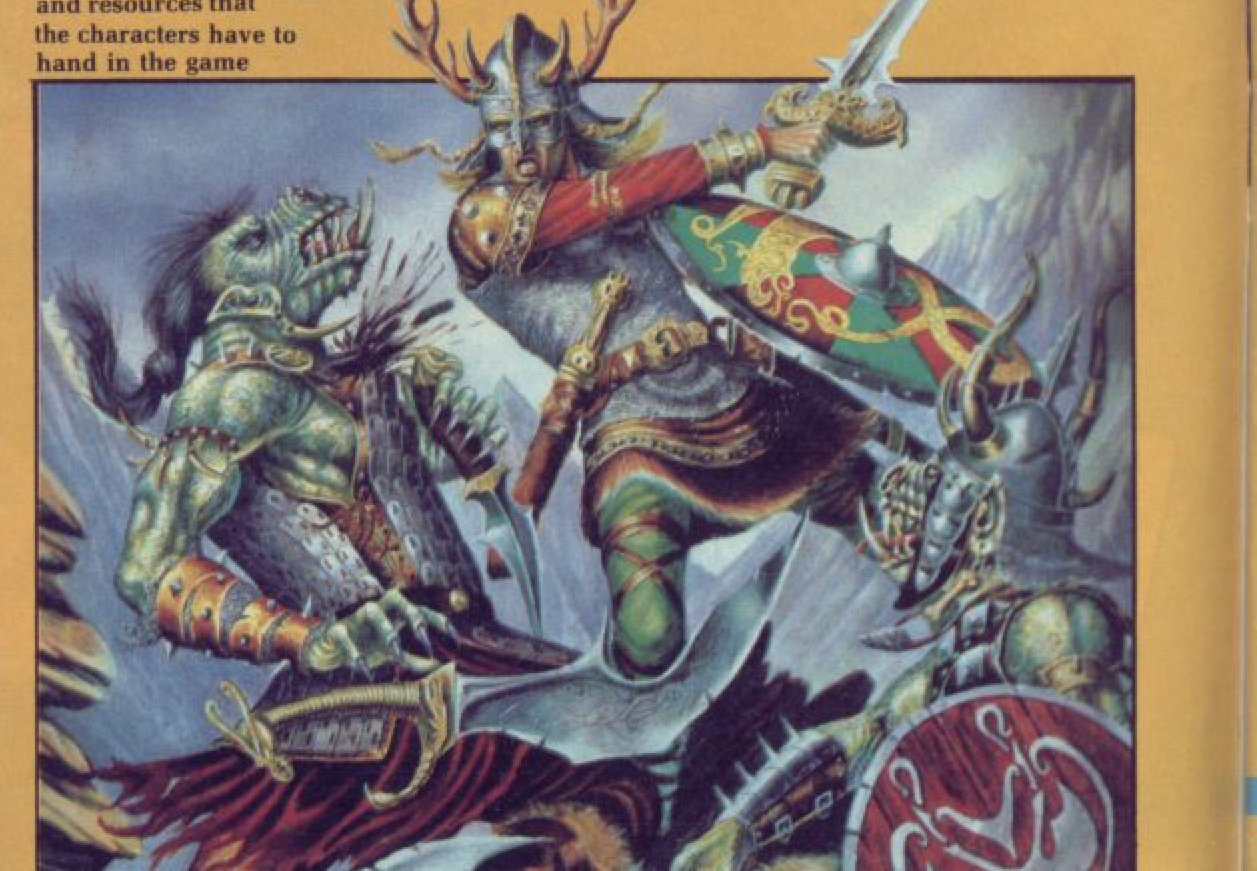
Now comes the news that Amstrad is developing the 128K+2. What's particularly exciting for me is the thought that some of the disc-only role-playing adventure games that Americans with their cursed IBMs and Apples have been enjoying will now turn up on the Spectrum.

So, what exactly is a role playing game?

In a Role-Playing Game, players control individual characters – you chose, or have chosen for you, what character you are. Then you have to face problems set by another player, and solve those problems – but using the intelligence and resources that the characters have to hand in the game world, not those the players have available to them in the real world. What I mean by this is each player has to behave *in character*. If you're a thief, for example, you'll be expected to steal.

Dungeons & Dragons – the most famous RPG – is set in a fantasy world where magic works and science doesn't. A group of players – usually around half a dozen – get together to form a party of bold adventurers who are going to brave the dangers of the fantasy world in search of riches and fame.

The players create their characters initially by throwing three six-sided dice to produce a score of three to eighteen in each of six characteristics: these are Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution and Charisma. If a player rolls up a character with a high score in Strength, that character will be a Fighter. High Intelligence means the character will be a Magic User, high wisdom a Cleric and high Dexterity a thief.



ROLE & PLAY



Pictures: by Angus Fieldhouse from the Games Workshop RPG *Runnequest*

Each of the four main character 'classes', as they are known in the game, has advantages and disadvantages. Fighters fight better than everybody else, Magic Users cast spells but are very vulnerable to physical attacks, Clerics can heal people but don't fight as well as fighters, and Thieves are very good at sneaking around stealing things but can't fight very well (unless attacking from behind) and can't use magic.

Constitution is how healthy a character is, how resistant to disease or poison or physical damage, and Charisma is an indication of how well the character gets on with other people.

While the players are creating their characters, another player, referred to as the Dungeon Master, (DM) will be going through his or her paperwork. The DM will have created some sort of adventure for the players – in many ways, very like a computer adventure. The DM will have prepared a map, let's say of an abandoned, ruined castle, which is now populated by various fell and evil monsters. These monsters will have treasure which they have collected over the years.

The characters now have to try and defeat the monsters and get the treasure.

Defeating monsters and collecting treasure gains the characters experience points. Each of the four character classes has a progression table, and when a certain number of points have been collected, the character will 'go up a level' – which means that the character will fight better, or will have more spells, or will be able to sneak around more easily. The tougher the characters get, the bigger the monsters they can take on, and the richer the treasure they can collect.

The object of the game is not to win, because there are no victory conditions as such. Instead, players try to create characters that survive for as long as possible. In addition, they try to 'role play'. Brave fighters don't run away. Stupid thieves don't try to solve things by applying intelligence. It's very difficult sometimes to restrict yourself to your character's abilities, but that's half the fun and challenge of the game.

Computer role-playing games also use the same basic ideas. In fact, many of them owe their origins very plainly to *Dungeons & Dragons*.

But, although mostly heavily derivative, computer role-playing games do have their advantages. For one thing, you don't need to find half a dozen people who have a couple of hours to spare to play a face-to-face RPG.

Basically, all computer role-playing games will involve the same standard steps. To begin with, you read the rules. This isn't as stupid as it sounds – these games are very complex, and the rule books reflect this. Plus, in many of these games you will find that every keystroke means a different thing, and you don't want to go making mistakes.

The next step is to create the character or characters you, the player, will be controlling in the fantasy game setting. Often, the character creation rules are almost word for word from the basic *D & D* rules. The computer 'rolls' three dice for each of six characteristics, Strength, Intelligence. . . then you choose a character class – Fighter, Mage.

Once you've created a character or group of characters that you are satisfied with, then you get to enter the game world. Some computer RPG titles, like Wizardry from Sirtech in the US (IBM PC/Apple II), or Swords and Sorcery (Spectrum) are basically just dungeons. The party of players is instantaneously transported to the entrance to the ruined castle/ underground labyrinth/wizard's lair without having to bother about having to find it.

In the sort of game where you are basically wandering round a dungeon, there are two ways programmers commonly use to show you where you are and where you can go. Either you see an aerial view of the maze, or you see what lies in front of you.

Most, though, throw in map movement as well. The Ultima series of games, published by Origin Systems (again IBM PC/Apple II), are good examples of the kind of thing which could easily be converted to the Plus 3. You get a scrolling map of where you are in the game world on-screen, with forests and mountains and seas and towns, villages and catles all marked on. Your position is marked by a cursor, and movement will be by cursor keys or by directions (N/S/E/W like in an ordinary adventure).

Then, when you get attacked by something nasty in the outside world, the screen will switch to showing a tactical map, with the members of your party and the enemy party shown on it. Usually, you get to cycle through your characters and get an opportunity to give each one order of the 'attack north', 'fireball west', 'heal so-and-so' variety.

There are dozens of computer RPGs in the States – the Ultima series, Wizardry, Alternative Reality, Telengard, Wizard's Crown, Shadowkeep to name but a few.

With the +3 with disc drive on the market, pretty soon we should be seeing a number of them being translated for the Spectrum. When they do come out, it's likely they will be pricy – but they should be well worth it. This sort of game means hours, days, months even of playing time.

And, unlike conventional adventures, you don't solve them and get rid of them – you keep on playing, trying to build up your characters.

Spectrums with disc drives are going to mean a whole new sort of gaming! ■

● Next month we're going to print our own mutant role-playing *D & D* style game – and there'll be no special equipment needed either. And the month after – something pretty chunky for the committed RPG enthusiast. . .



DURELL

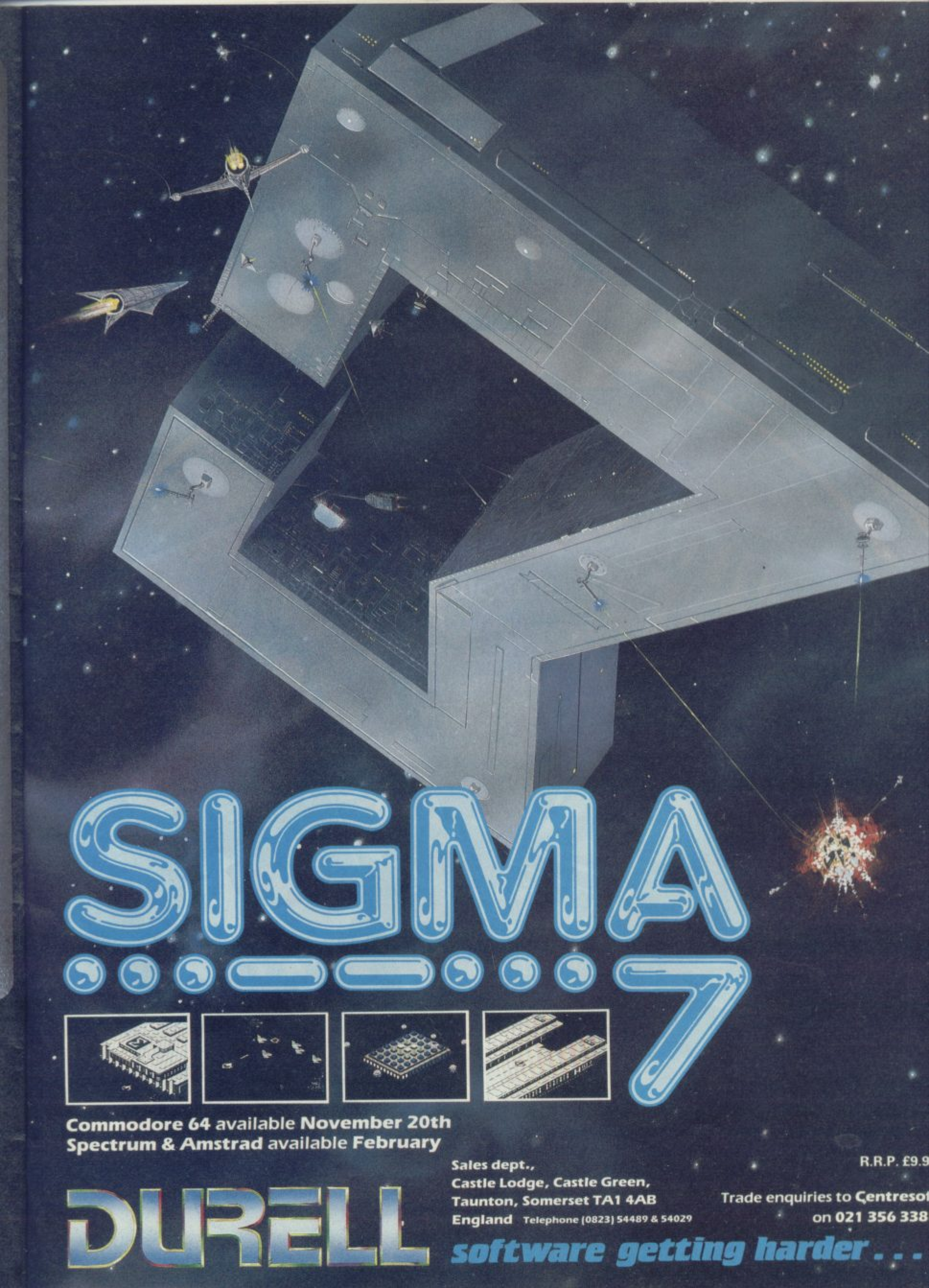


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LETTERS

Mind your language..

I read every page of your magazine (well, nearly every page) and I saw the letter from R.W. Miles who complained that he could not understand the language your magazine is written in. Well, it's written in English, if you have not already worked that out.

Also on reading Ben Payton's letter, I think a 'software star rating' is not necessary as the readers can make up their own minds whether the game is worth the dosh from your comprehensive software reviews. Unless the 'reader' is illiterate and can only count up to five and look at the screen-shots.

Your magazine is brilliant, you print millions of reviews and helpful tips. Your 'type in' programs are better than most magazines I can mention (namely the magazine which put an ad. in your Feb '87 issue).

I've only got a few issues of your brilliant magazines and wondered if you are selling back issues and how much they cost.

W Man
Maidenhead

P.S. Would it be possible to print some 'Pokes' for the older games.

P.P.S. when will you be printing the results of the Absurdly Generous Competition (Hope



A Frenchman

I've won something).

● *Bien sûr il est, én't en anglais. Oui, Non, Bientot. Back issues for most months are available for the cover price. The results of the Absurdly Generous Competition will be provided next month*

We want war?

I used to buy Crash but have recently changed to SU. My only gripe is that you don't have a section that specifically deals with wargames. There are a lot of us budding Napoleans about so please, please don't forget about us. Please start printing hints and tips, on a regular basis on games such as **Desert Rats, Arnhem etc.** Perhaps then, if some of these games were more widely publicised and discussed there would be more and better games.

Mark Goodearl
Chatham

● ***Hope you liked last months feature. We will cover wargames when there's something new – see reviews this SU***

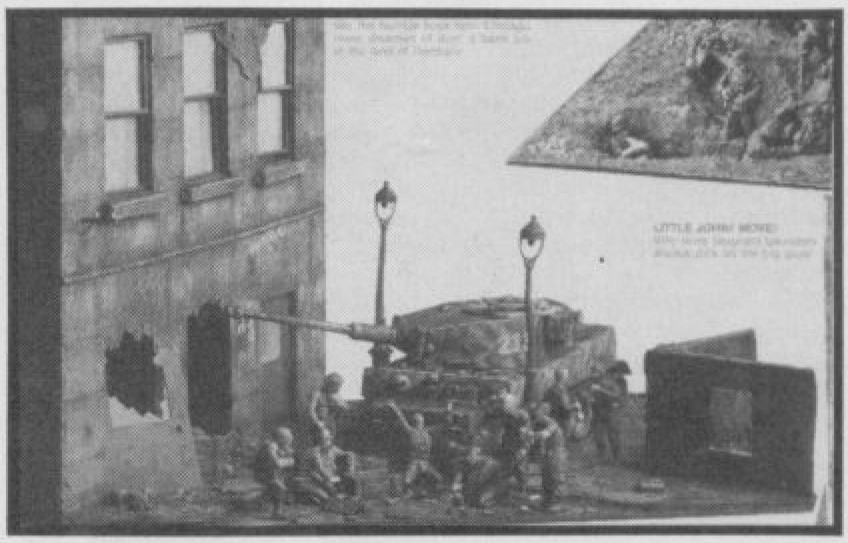
Scalexctric... er ...Scalextric

We are writing to inform you that we have been trying to obtain a copy of one of the games you reviewed in your Feb issue. We refer to **Scalexctric** on page 30. Every time we try to buy it they try to sell us a game called **Scalextric**. Should we buy this inferior copy or wait for the release of the one you reviewed?

Paul and Glen Gibney
Co. Antrim
N Ireland

P.S. We think your mag is the best around even if you make the *odd* spelling mistake.

● ***The old won? Shirley you just?***



Picture this

I have noticed in your mega-fab mag that you are changing some things, and I have a suggestion. Why not have an art corner? I am sure that many people have just got a new game with a jazzy cover, and have drawn it.

Keep up the good work, lads.

Mark Boswell
Coatbridge
Lanarkshire

● ***Check out the Shadow Skimmer Compo on page 45***



Art cornered

Sinclair User in forgery shock



The man from the bank greets SU

The Bank's attention has been drawn to a reproduction of part of the reverse of a Bank of England £10 note on page 38 of the February edition (No. 58) of Sinclair User.

Under Section 18 (1) of the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 the reproduction of Bank of England notes, in whole or in part, requires the prior consent of the Bank in writing; moreover, the Bank own the copyright in their notes.

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● ***Action has been taken, the only thing we haven't done is burn the original fiver – Jon Riglar wanted it back***

Two part trilogy



Will Mike Singleton ever complete part three of **The Lord of Midnight Trilogy – Eye of the Moon?** He seems to be involved in so many games now, that nothing ever gets completed.

I wrote to him at Beyond, but my letter was returned.

Could you please contact him, and ask when I can blow the dust off my Spectrum and rejoin Luxor?

Keith Anderson
Southamtpon

P.S. If he's stuck I'd love to help.

● ***Mike is stranded in the mystic wastelands at the moment so don't hold your breath***



Jon Riglar – case for the defence?

Jon Riglar rules OK(?)

I am writing to say just how much I enjoy reading Jon Riglar's Zapchat every month. He is absolutely wonderful and produces by far the best tips available in any magazine for sale on the shelf. I think that people who send him hate mail concerning the way he plays his guitar are ridiculous and only waste space in this incredible and totally wonderful, truly amazing and prestigious magazine.

Since his arrival in the magazine, Zapchat has improved 100% and for those who want to get rid of the poor bloke, consider the alternatives first. You would have a column devoid of colour maps, scaled down to two pages in black and white. These would be full of reader's letters claiming high scores on **Manic Miner** and the like. Do you want to return to that?

He has added humourous comments (well I think so) and a lively atmosphere to the column which is written with class and precision. (and a Typestar, don't forget the Typestar!) No longer are we doomed to boring old fuddy dudy columns which certain people would like. Well done Jon!

Lots of Love,
Adrian Scrumpwerstle.

P.S. Hello to John, Graham, Jim and the incredibly 'young' Mad Celt.

● ***Oh Jon, they'll never fall for it. . .***

Riglar and the joysticks



Liked in our test – the Mach I

I am writing to ask you if I could have a copy of the Sinclair User Joystick Zap Test results.

The reason I am asking for them is recently I have lost the November issue of your brilliant magazine, the issue the test was in. I want to buy the best joystick on the market, so Please Please Please can I have the results.

S Roberts
Hucclecote,
Gloucester

P.S. Tell Jon Rigler his Zapchat is ace

● ***Excuse me are you sure you are not Jon Riglar? Joysticks we liked included: Mach 1 (£14.95) Speed King (£12.95) and Kraft (£9.95)***

Dixons dosh

In the flood of letters concerning service, or rather lack of it, at Dixons I feel I must write as well. It concerns a Dixons Data/cassette recorder which we forked out 20 quid for. When I got home the games loaded perfectly at first but after a few weeks the problems really began. First game to fall under the spell of the faulty recorder was **Dan Dare** then **Uridium** and **Firelord** and so on. I checked the leads, the plugs and the computer but no fault was found. I am rapidly loosing faith (if I had any to begin with) in Dixons. I just hope that Dixons realises what it is doing and makes amends or else it will certainly lose customers, me included.

Nicholas Barlow
Kew
Richmond

P.S. Why did you place an advert for Commie User in page 88 of your ace March mag?

● ***Commie User begged to be allowed in and we couldn't take its pitiful whinings any longer***

More obscenity in SU

In the February issue of SU I came across Mr Lensons letter, of complaint about the so called 'obscene' language. Mr Lenson may not know this but worse language is often heard in public places. In other words it is a waste of time to try to hide these everyday words. Even on the television more obscene words pop up. If Mr Lenson isn't having us on, I suggest he opens his eyes as well as his ears and ignore bad language like other people do. No one can, or ever will, stop people swearing.

Stephen Doyle
Northern Ireland

P.S. How are minds 'filled' with filth by just three words.

FREE

Recently you have been giving away free booklets every other month. I'm not complaining about this but why can't you attach them to the magazine with sellotape, like *The complete guide to Sinclair Software,* instead of the awful FREE tape. I wouldn't mind if you wrote free on the booklet but however hard I try I can never manage to get the FREE tape off without either ripping the magazine or the booklet. *Gordo's book of Adventures* was a classic example of a booklet with 'impossible to remove FREE tape. Apart from the FREE tape, Sinclair User is a great magazine, but I have one suggestion of how to make it better: To make the reviews more accurate you could have half stars: If a game was well worth the money, but not quite "solid gold", you'd give it 4½ stars (★★★★) and if a game was above average, but not quite worth the money it would get 3½ stars.

Mark Barnwell
Cornwall

● ***Um. Maybe. Anyone else like this idea?***

Streets ahead

It appears that your magazine and it's rivals are being published progressively earlier in the month prior to the month the issue is due.

Could you tell me:

a) Is there a race to issue earlier, thereby capturing a greater % of the market, and

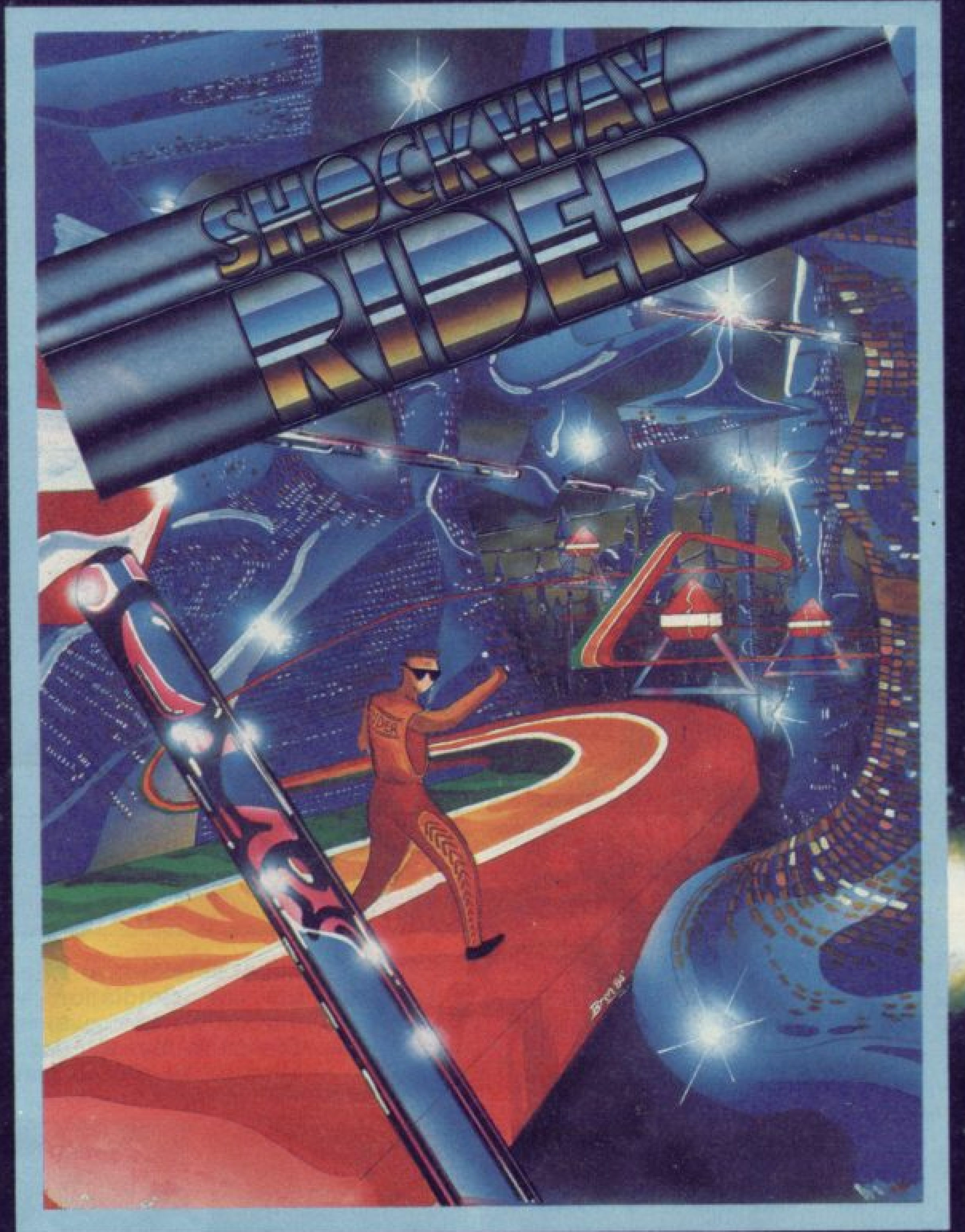
b) Do you agree things have gone two far, when in the February issue of Sinclair User page 113 there is a "caption contest" where entries must be in by January 30th.

Bill Knipe
Leeds

● ***We publish on the 18th of each month and have done for ages – can't speak for other magazines. . .***



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▲ In the top slot: Olli and Lissa



▲ May tip for the top: Nemesis

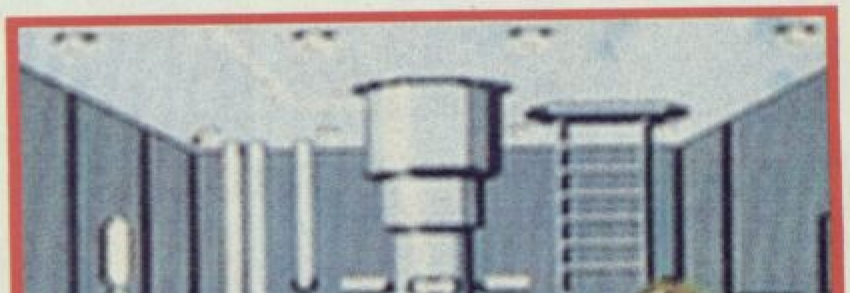


▲ Longest on the chart: Olli and Lissa

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4	NEW!	AGENT X	MASTERTRONIC	£1.99
5	(10)	180	MASTERTRONIC	£2.99
6	NEW!	FIST II	MELBOURNE HOUSE	£8.95
7	NEW!	NINJA	MASTERTRONIC	£2.99
8	NEW!	BMX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS	£1.99
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20	(17)	HIT PACK	ELITE	£9.95

HOTTEST CLIMBERS

Silent Service is an interesting release. It's the first simulation – actually of submarine warfare – to be released on the Spectrum by the US simulation kings Microprose. **Butch Hard Guy** is quite a



▲ Hot: Silent Service



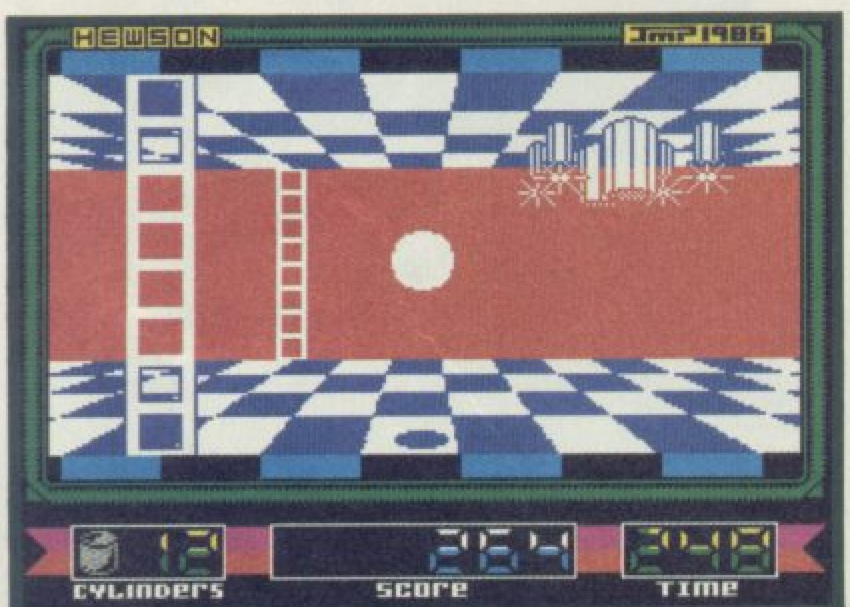
▲ Hot: Butch Hard Guy

E ★ N ★ T ★ Y

Compiled by Gallup for *Sinclair User*

graphically good but dull pot-boiler with cute characters. redictable but well executed	★★★☆☆
s good a conversion of the classic arcade original as could have een wished for. No-one should be disappointed	★★★★★
xcellent conversion from the coin-op. Inevitable hardware restric- ons make the game less 'special', but it's still great	★★★★☆
ood value multi-load graphic adventure. Nice graphics and better- han-average plot	★★★★☆
ould have been boring and tedious. Instead it's funny, exciting and mpressive. A closet hit	★★★★★
sequel that's actually better than the hit that spawned it. Now all hat whacking has a purpose	★★★★★
ist II equivalent. Budget but inferior. Acceptable graphics but lacks aying power	★★★☆☆
rilliant conversion of a C64 hit. It's a genuine simulation – a biker's aradise with smooth slippery action	★★★★★
ails miserably. Disappointing, eh Greavsie? What can I say Saint. hey've let themselves down badly	★☆☆☆☆
ood value collection of Konami's Imagine titles. Nothing brilliant, othing really awful either. With Yie Ar Kung Fu and Green Beret	★★★★★
assable 3D racing game with bikes not cars. Two-player option akes it more fun. On budget it's good	★★★☆☆
ice try Jimmy, but unless you're prepared to spend time training ou'll never make it out of the fourth division	★★★★☆
ttractive arcade-style game, rather than awesomely detailed, but r an undemanding game it can't be beaten	★★★★★
ood adaption of the original arcade game. Compulsive and enzied. A good start for Konami's DIY approach	★★★★★
ust what was expected. Not great, but it's pleasant enough. Better han most licencing deals	★★★☆☆
he best thing Ocean's done for ages. Highly imaginative plot, ameplay and graphics. Don't miss it	★★★★★
cean fails to realise the potential of another possibly terrific plot. ull graphics and very little depth	★★★☆☆
n impossible coin-op conversion surprisingly well done. The raphics are terrific – the problem may lie in the gameplay	★★★★★
raphically better even than Steve Davis' Snooker. But you can't lay against the computer – it's strictly a two-player affair	★★★★☆
our Elite biggies from the past all at once. Includes Commando, omb Jack, Frank Bruno's Boxing and Airwolf	★★★★★

nice inventive mix of Commando and runny-jumpy style games, with a twist of humour. And **Impossaball** is another quality release from Hewson. This time an infuriating bounce-the-ball-through-the-obstacle-course game, but very cleverly done



▲ Hot: Impossaball

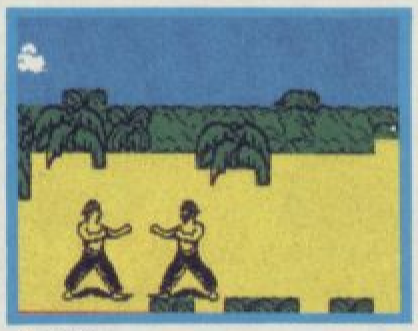
CHART ★ ★ ★ ★ BREAKDOWN

ARCADE

1	GAUNTLET	US GOLD
2	PAPERBOY	ELITE
3	FIST II	MELBOURNE HOUSE
4	JAIL BREAK	KONAMI
5	THE GREAT ESCAPE	OCEAN

ADVENTURE

1	FAIRLIGHT II	THE EDGE
2	DRACULA	CRL
3	HEAVY ON THE MAGICK	GARGOYLE
4	TWICE SHY	MOSAIC
5	KWAH!	MELBOURNE HOUSE


▲ Fist II


▲ Jail Break



▲ BMX Simulator


▲ Konami's Golf

STRATEGY SIMULATION

1	FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR	GREMLIN
2	SUPER SOCCER	IMAGINE
3	KONAMI'S GOLF	IMAGINE
4	TRIVIAL PURSUIT	DOMARK
5	HEAD COACH	ADDICTIVE

WORK-OUT TOOL-KIT

1	WHAM! THE MUSIC BOX	MELBOURNE HOUSE
2	ARTIST II	SOFTECHNICS
3	THE WRITER	SOFTECHNICS
4	GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR	INCENTIVE
5	ART STUDIO	RAINBIRD

BUDGET

1	OLLI AND LISSA	FIREBIRD
2	AGENT X	MASTERTRONIC
3	180	MASTERTRONIC
4	NINJA	MASTERTRONIC
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IF I HAD A DISC DRIVE....

A Spectrum with a disc drive? We asked the industry what they would do with it......

Andrew Hewson (Hewson)

It would save a lot of problems! The possibilities are enormous. We wouldn't have to worry so much about compressing data. One thing it would certainly do is improve the quality of the backdrops and other graphics detail in a game – it would be possible to load screens as necessary from disc without having to hold all that information in the computer memory. It would certainly make things more fun. It might mean that the Spectrum would stop being just a games machine and people would start to do other kinds of software.

I'd be very supportive of a Spectrum with discs – I think the market is crying out for it, the Spectrum has never had a really standard system – the equivalent of what Kempston is to joysticks. Price would obviously be a key but it would have to be under £200.



Tim Langdell (The Edge)

A disc drive would be right up our street. It would remove so many constraints on what we could do. With **Fairlight II** we had to squeeze and cram it into 128K or have two loads on the 48K machine. We wouldn't have to spend so much time cramming stuff in. It's things like graphic detail that really use up Ram, with a disc drive we'd be able to keep graphic data on disc until it was needed.

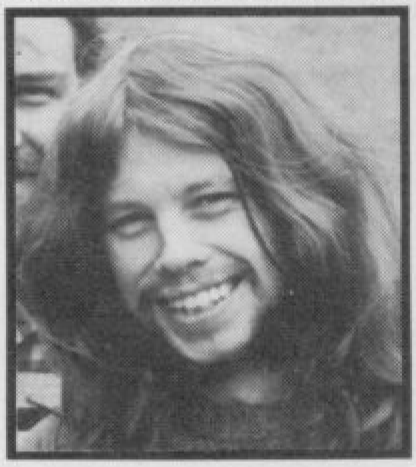
It should be possible to find a way of using the disc for multi-tasking as well, so that more data is loaded whilst you are playing. Under the Softechnics label we already do a lot of material that has been designed to be used with virtually all the disc drives available. With a standard disc drive it would be possible to have very sophisticated graphics programs, even things like page make-up with the disc holding alternative fonts and even having different point sizes.

The key thing for such a machine is price. It has to be under £200 and if the rumours of an Atari ST for under £200 are true it will have to be closer to £150.

John Heap (Denton Designs)

I am working on arcade adventures at the moment, doing something in 128K for the +2. With a disc drive you stop having to put a limit on what you can do. 128K games will take absolutely ages to load in from tape, especially with the problems over using hyperloads on the +2, so a disc drive is becoming almost vital.

Aside from the sheer extra data room, the other thing you could do with a disc drive is storing inputs to customise the game and do things like instant action replays of events in the game. I am definitely keen on the idea of the machine, it just depends on there being a decent amount of support for it.



David Ward (Ocean)

Well, a disc drive on a Spectrum is less of an innovation that it might have been. It would have been more significant if it had happened in the 48K days, with 128K I doubt that there is a big advantage from increased data space.

I think it will have some effect on software, though the real point is that you can interact with the program, an action in the game may actually change the information on the disc. This is where the idea of interactive fiction comes in – for example, adventure games can be designed to respond in a considerably more personalised way – keeping track of your previous actions. The other point is random access, which lets you structure the program in more interesting ways.

A Spectrum with disc drive could be significant, Commodore sales over Christmas had caught up with Sinclair ones and I think a disc machine could develop a new market distinct from the existing one – it largely depends on whether the +2 would continue to be sold alongside any new machine. Certainly we would support such a machine, probably beginning with conversions of some of the Commodore disc only software we already have.

Geoffrey Heath (Mastertronic)

I don't think we would be able to support disc software for a Spectrum at the existing price bands – £1.99 or £2.99, but it would be the sort of thing we might put out under the Melbourne House banner.

We would have to wait and see any new machine and a lot would depend on it but I think one way or another we would produce software for it. It'll be excellent for loading speed, access time and for multi-load products.



Mike Singleton (Programmer)

Obviously a disc drive effectively gives you extra Ram. It means that you can switch things in and out as they are needed, it will be particularly good, for example, for things like digitised speech and graphics or digital music tracks. With a disc drive you can have as much as the disc will hold which should be plenty.

For my personal interest, a disc would make it a lot easier to do things like play by mail. More generally it could lead to such things as customised programs, both in the sense where adventures respond more closely to your exact inputs and offering arcade games you can alter yourself.

One area I've been interested in is the idea of 'recording' live action into Ram i.e. using Ram like a laserdisc to store sections of animated action. Obviously with a disc that idea could become so much more effective, you could save a much longer sequence of actions and have them introduced at particular points in the game.

Greg Follis (Gargoyle)



We hear the news of a Spectrum+3, and built-in disk drive, with some emotion, if not to say, mild hysteria. You see, at Gargoyle, 99% of all game development is done on Amstrad PCW8512's, with the object code being ported to the target machine via an RS232 or Centronics interface. All development, that is, except for the images for the poor old Spectrum – no matter how much we try to emulate the Spectrum's visual 'capabilities' on other machines, we can't quite capture the unique feel of the original. Therefore, all Spectrum artwork is executed directly onto an old 48K Speccy (we like our rubber keys) and stored on a microdrive.

Yes, complex games can be presented on a machine with built in disc drive but to think of developing a game without the strain imposed by the ever-imminent demise of a Microdrive, brings a tear to the eye, a hoarse cry to the lips. ■

COMPETITION

BLAMMMM!



Shadow Skimmer is the fastest most amazing blast 'em up you've ever seen. We raved about it – you will too.

And this is the chance for you to get your hands on a copy for nothing. Better still, this is your chance to win a framed original of the *Shadow Skimmer* painting (the brilliant picture on the cover of the cassette box) signed by the programmer of the game and dedicated to the winner. Not only that but it'll be pretty nicely framed, too.

The prizes

1 framed *Shadow Skimmer* picture
20 copies of the game Shadow Skimmer
10 Edge pens.

So there are lots of prizes and lots of chances to win! All you have to do is use your imagination and draw us a skimmer.

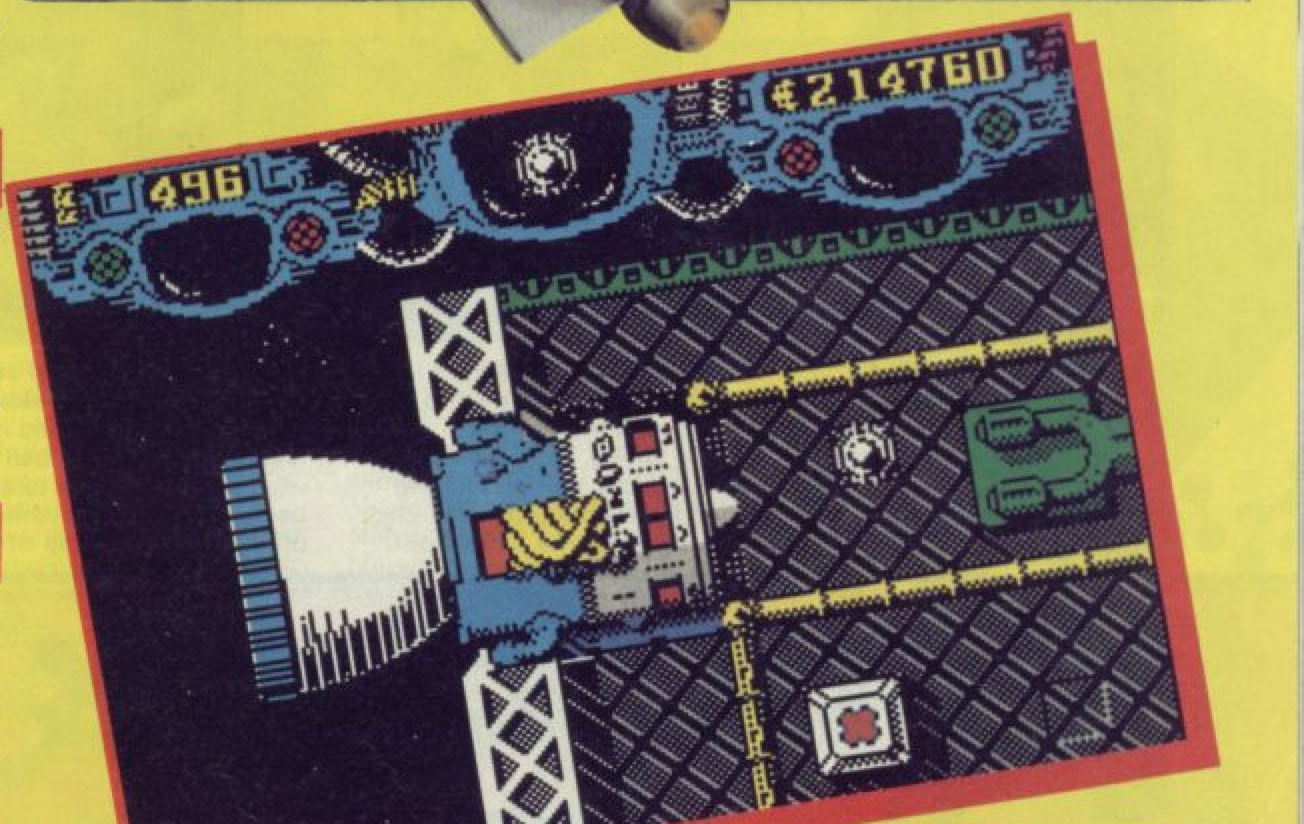
What you have to do

Use any kind of drawing materials you like – pencil, pen, paint, even your computer if you like, and design us your perfect Space Skimmer. There aren't any other rules. Just use your imagination and come up with the best picture you can. If the entries are really great we might even print them (if they're naff we'll just forget about the whole thing).

There is almost no chance whatsoever of you ever getting your picture sent back so you'd better be preared never to see it agin, on the other hand, with such fantastic prizes on offer it must be worth having a go . . .

How to enter

Send your completed picture to 'You Gotta Draw the Line Somewhere Shadow Skimmer Compo', Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. All entries must reach us by April 30 along with the completed coupon on the right ▶





Name ....
Address ....
....
....

*Competition not open to EMAP or Edge employees and anybody with little artistic skill.

ARKANOID

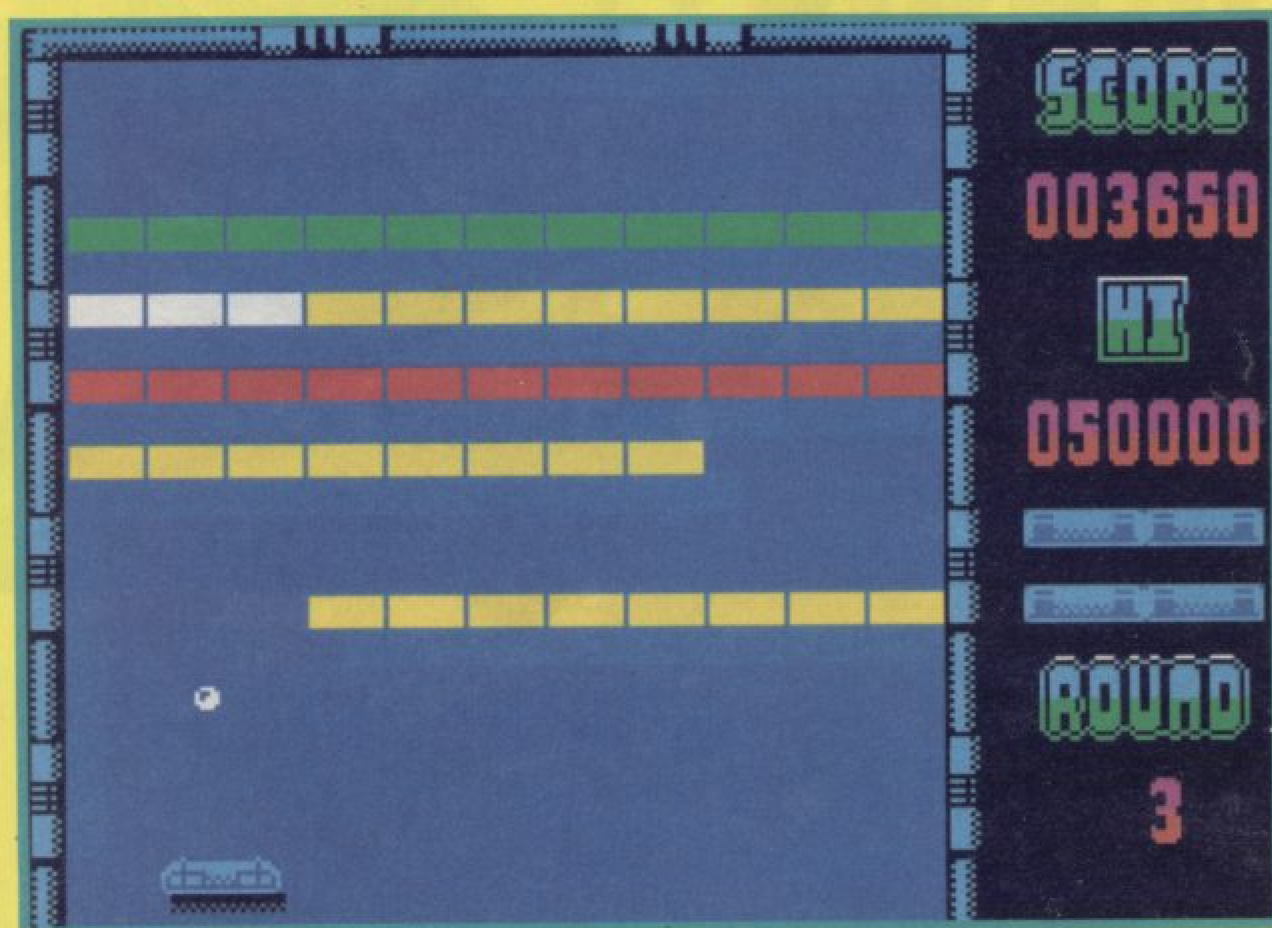
FACTS BOX

Slick graphics, good sound and stunning gameplay. Genuinely addictive qualities make Arkanoid a winner

ARKANOID
Label: Imagine
Author: Mike Lamb
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Tim Douglas

★★★★★



Arkanoid is Imagine's umpteenth licence tie-in.

So far – as licences go – the arcade conversions have been infinitely superior to the TV/film links and this fits the trend.

Arkanoid comes from the Taito arcade machine and is completely wonderful.

Old timers, having seen the screenshots, will be scoffing loundly, claiming that it's exactly the same a **Breakout**.

And this is, in fact, not all that far from the truth. **Breakout** was invented years ago and it featured a bat and a ball and a wall. The object was to keep bouncing the ball (a white blob) off the wall at the top of the screen and not let it slip past you on the re-bound.

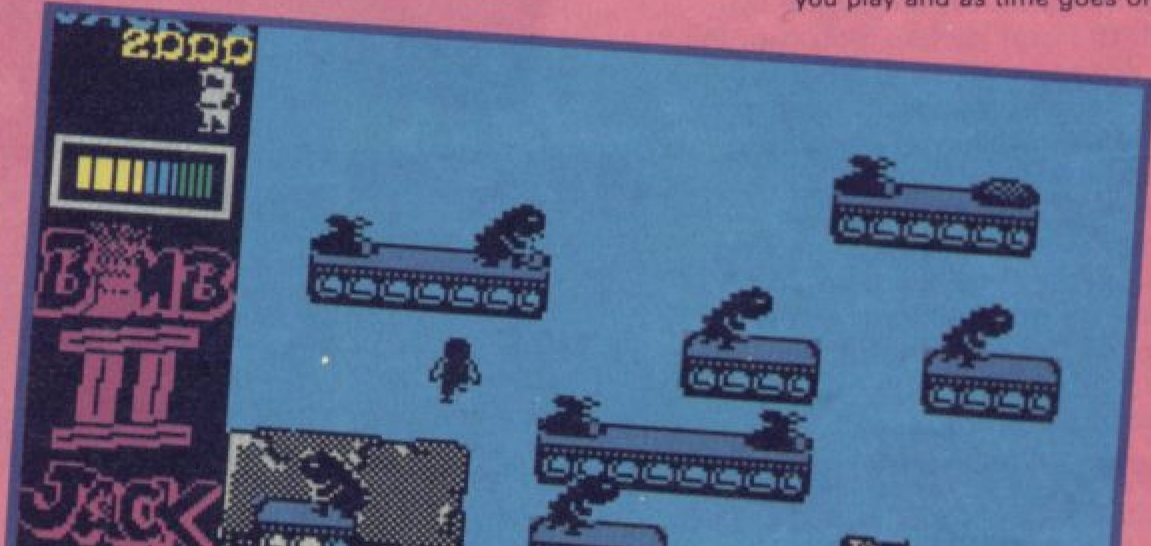
Now Ocean's game is at least a couple of generations down the line. It's still got the bat and the ball (still a white blob) and a wall of some sort but there are so many little twiddles and added bits, accusations of unoriginality are really a bit pointless.

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC

The plot tells of how your mothership, **Arkanoid** was destroyed, leaving only a shuttle craft, Vaus. In order for things to be well with the universe, you must destroy 32 levels of walls before reaching the Dimension Changer which

Bombjack II

Bouncing Bombjack's back, even more determined to outwit the shaggy monsters on the levels and grab the sacks of gold. The trick with **Bombjack II** is these wooly adversaries keep mutating. As you play and as time goes on,



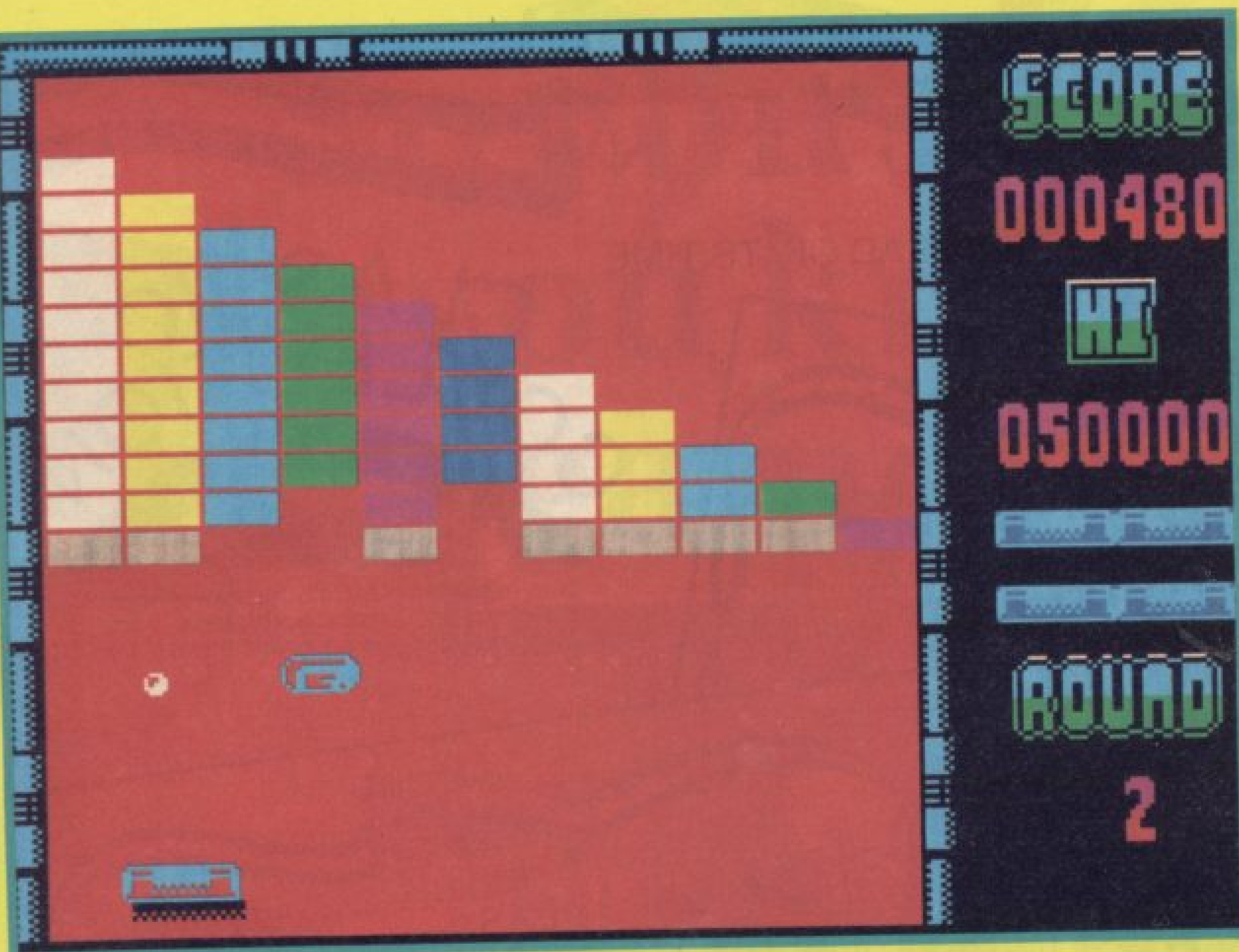
FACTS BOX

Platforms and ladders with great style. Terrific sequel to a strong original, which is thrown in too as a Free extra

BOMBJACK II
Label: Elite
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★★



ARCADE REVIEW

numerous and infuriating they are. You can destroy them by crashing the ball into them, but this deflects its flightpath.

That's the game, but it's all wrapped up in slick graphics and super-smooth movement.

Despite it's relatively primative roots, **Arkanoid** is a quite extraordinarily playable game■



▶ It may look like **Breakout** but it plays like a whole new game. How many balls can you juggle?

will allow you to reverse time and bring back Arkanoid. OK, the plot stinks.

Hit *Fire* and you're off. You're the blocky thing at the bottom of the screen. The ball sits on the top of your craft and after a couple of seconds, it'll fly up toward the top of the screen. It won't get particularly far before slapping into a large coloured square and being bounced back down again.

All pretty familiar so far.

A few bounces on and that's all changed. A kind of Hedex tablet with a letter on will drift down the screen. Now, each tablet does different things for you. For example, if you guide Vaus into one with the letter S on, the ball will slow down. One wit a C on it gives your ship a kind of sticky property: the ball will stop when you touch it, and you can then move to whichever position you like before launching it again.

Other letters make your ship wider (thus making it wasier to hit the ball), give you extra lifes, move you to the next level or break the ball into three parts.

This last offers you a very strange kind of bonus situation where you have to juggle three balls instead of one. The final tablet arms your ship with lasers which can blast away walls and aliens.

Oh, I hadn't mentioned the aliens before, had I? They appear at the top of the screen and work their way down. The higher the level, the more

Bombjack II

unless you get rid of them they transform – and each time they do they get a whole lot trickier to deal with.

To destroy one of these Wooly adversaries – they look like dinosaurs during their early stages of each level – unsheath your knife and prod the beast off the platform. Alternatively, you can jump frenziedly around the screen, picking up sacks. Pick them all up and all the remaining monsters die.

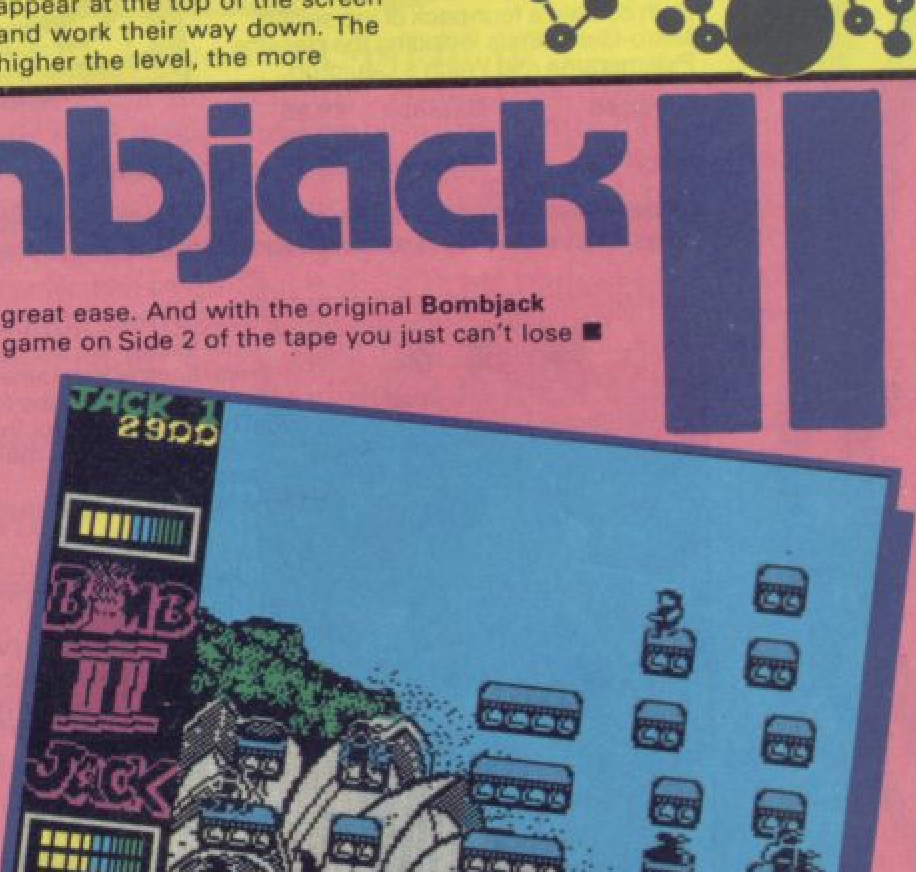
This latter mode of operation is dangerous because any contact with the enemy drains your strength.

Don't take too long clearing the platforms. The monsters go through two mutations. After approx 40 seconds the soft skinned carnivores turn into armour-plated robots. A further 30 seconds and they follow your lead and start jumping about all around the screen. Yet more lost energy for you.

More hassle. You can jump only vertically or horizontally from some of the platforms. That means a lot of trial and error when finding the best way to get around a screen. And in some cases you're forced to jump to a very short platform when you can't help but bump into a monster. The sketchy instructions on the insert suggest that you move quickly to and from the danger level. They don't say, however, that you should continually press the joystick left or right, knife at the ready to deal a glancing blow to the hopefully hapless monster: If you don't it could push you off the platform.

It's not all bad news. Bags of gold normally score 100 points when tightly zipped but if a bag splits open – most do just before the monsters start to jump – it's worth 200 points. Why – that's a mystery. **Bombjack II's** a real pig to complete. That's to say it's a real sharp release and a great sequel.

It's jaunty graphics and variety of platforms – colour and structure – takes it to the top of the platform game league, outstripping **Cobra** with style and **Legend of Kage** with great ease. And with the original **Bombjack** game on Side 2 of the tape you just can't lose ■



AHEAD OF ITS TIME

AMSTRAD
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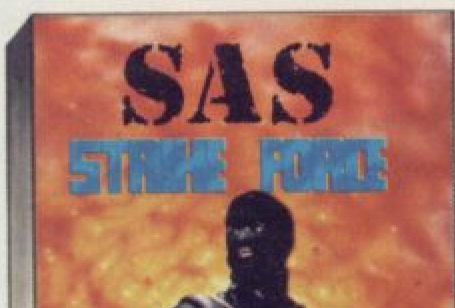
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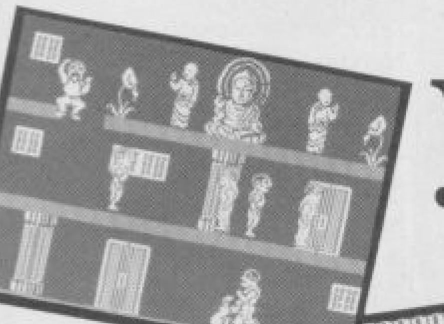
Commodore	Cassette	**£9.95**
	Disk	**£13.95**

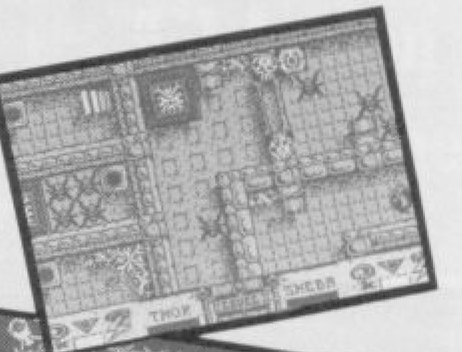
Available from all good software stores now. Look out for the distinctive pack.

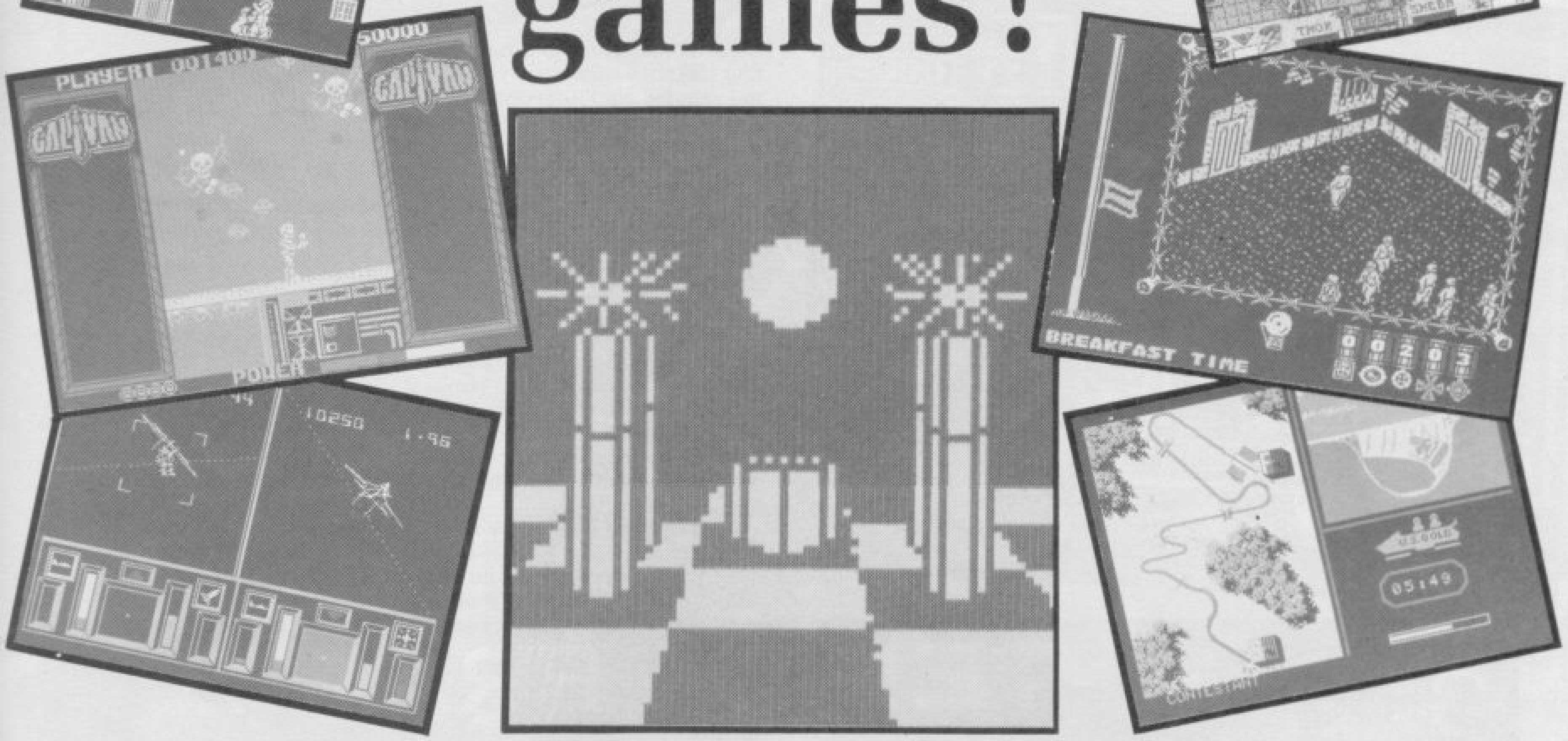
AHEAD OF ITS TIME

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So you think you know games?







You do? Then we need you take part in the SU monthly survey!

What is the survey?

Each month we're going to take the chart topping titles and ask you to take them to bits for us. We want to know more about these games than anyone has ever asked before. Every fine detail will be questioned, examined and scrutinised again. Then we're going to assemble your data to compile the definitive judgement – your judgement – of that program. Each month we'll be printing the results and these will build up – issue by issue – into the most in depth guide to the classic games ever compiled.

What we want you to do

Obviously it's a gigantic project and we're going to need your help. We're looking for volunteers who will be prepared to be SU Star Game Panelists. What you have to do is fill in the form below and send it, together with a stamped addressed envelope to SU Star Panel. Then, if you are selected as one of the month's panel we'll be sending you notification of which game we want you to judge for us, together with a Survey Form for the game which we want you to fill in and send back to us. Then we'll take all the completed forms and produce form it the SU Reader's Valuation.

What do you get out of it?

Well not a lot, actually! Apart from the thrill of a job well done and contributing your data to the survey you'll get a mention in the magazine and we'll send you an incredible SU Star Panelist badge. And they'll be pretty rare things – more exclusive even that a Blue Peter badge. Only those who have contributed to our data panel will be entitled to wear one. (Incidentally if you see someone wearing one who isn't entitled to – we want to know, 'cos it ain't allowed.)

How to enter

Just fill in the form below and send it to SU Star Panel, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, and don't forget to include a stamped addressed envelope.

Star Panel Entry Form

Name .... Age............

Address ....

....

....

What sort of games do you like? Tick Box(s)

Arcade ☐ Simulation ☐

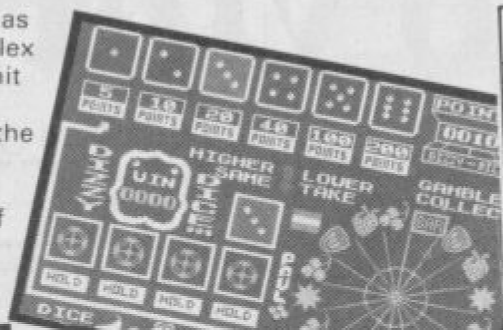
Strategy/Wargames ☐ Adventures ☐

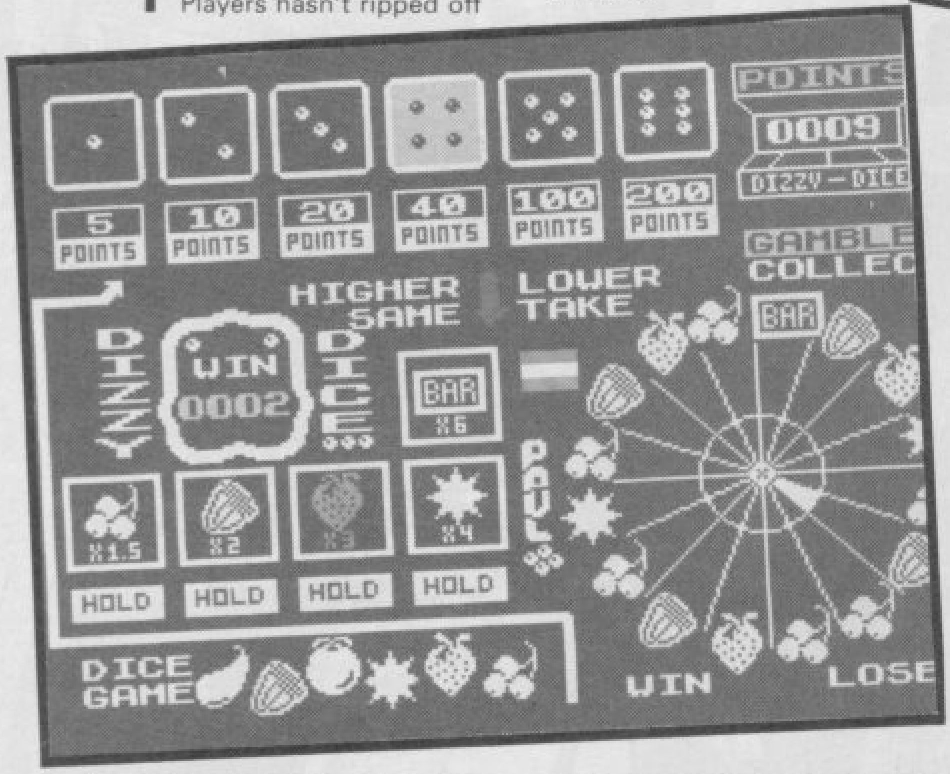
STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

DIZZY DICE

Take on a one-armed bandit and blow a bank. No, Players hasn't ripped off **They Stole a Million,** but it has come up with the most complex fruit machine simulation to hit the Spectrum.

There are two versions of the game, the simplest being Ordinary Dice. Roll the fruity combinations with a press of the S key – no joysticks allowed – and watch as the cherries,





lemons, bars *et al* spin in the four jackpot windows. If one of the winning combinations shows up you can collect yourr meagre winnings.

Once you've chosen to take a chance the pointer on the gamble wheel spins past the fruit symbols.

If you choose correctly here you can stash the money and return to the fruit machine or progress to the dice game and, hopefully, increase your money even more. It's so simple, but you can add up to $200 to your total if you guess whether the next roll of the dice will be higher or lower than the current face showing.

The Ordinary Dice game is easy, the odds are more or less against you, but Bank Mode is tougher. Each casino bank has a financial limit, and to break one you just have to bankrupt it. From Bank One you'll need to win £100 while you'll need to get £1000 form Bank Five. The rules are the same as in the Ordinary Dice game but the level system makes things much more interesting.

Players has made a tired old game into a complex dice with chance. At £1.99 I can see nothing wrong about this offering which, in terms of graphics, has more than some £7.99 games going for it■

FACTS BOX

A fruit machine simulation with several dicey twists. Two types of game plan with good graphics to boot

DIZZY DICE
Label: Players
Author: in-house
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★☆

TENTH FRAME

According to US Gold's **Tenth Frame** rating system, I could be an amateur or professional, but I can't get the right swing on those shiney, black bowls to knock all the pine over in either one or two strikes.

The basic play is easy enough, but factors such as speed of ball and direction determine the standard of your game. If you try kiddie level – easy as pie – the speed at which the bowl travels down the alley is automatically set for the best advantage and the bowl will always travel in a straight line towards the pins.

You can aim the ball in any straight line down the alley. Push forward on the joystick and a cursor appears about a centimetre away from your little bowler. Move it across the alley until it's at the point where you want to line up the shot and pull back on the stick to move the man around. Hit *Fire* and the bowler tosses the ball through the invisible cursor point and, hopefully, at the pins. Each bowler gets two opportunities to knock over – strike – all ten pins – on each visit to the alley, and ten visits to the alley. The sub-totals for each visit are added up to a grand total of pins down – if you do exceptionally well you may get an extra frame of play, just like those spacey coin-ops give you a bonus go.

FACTS BOX

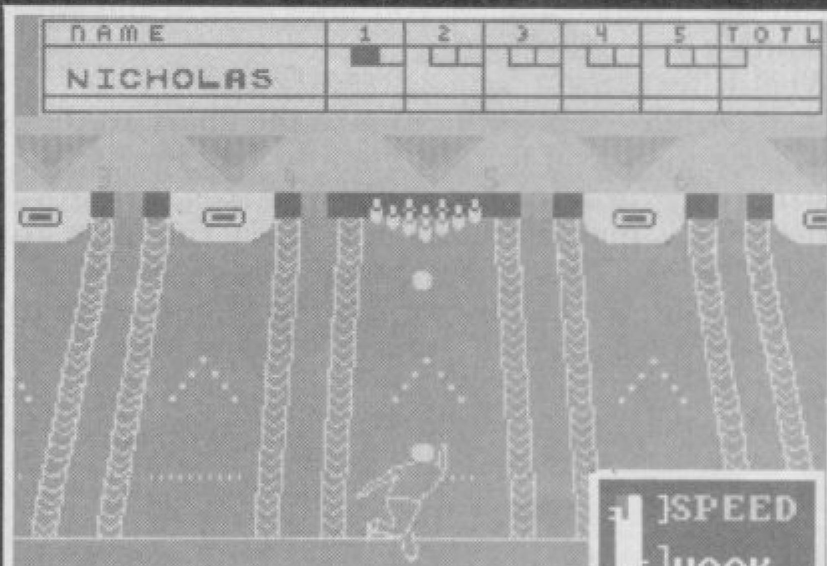
Bowling game with no outstanding features. Even the background colour is jaded. But if bowling's your game....

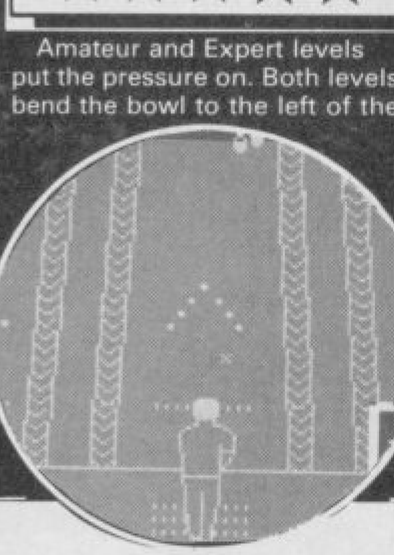
10TH FRAME
Label: US Gold
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★☆☆

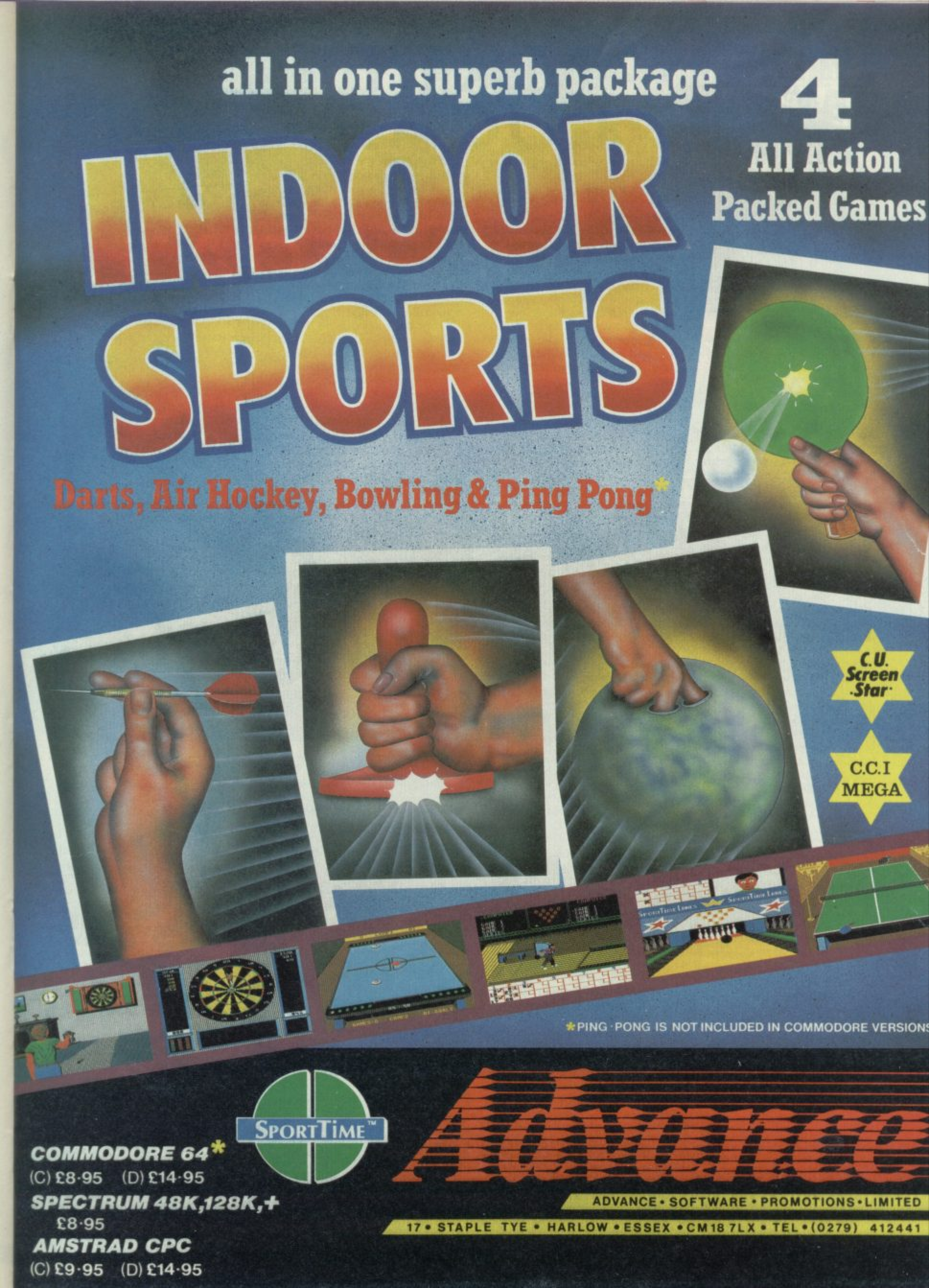
Amateur and Expert levels put the pressure on. Both levels bend the bowl to the left of the alley as you throw it. You've got to compensate for this spinning drift by moving your player and the line-of-sight cursor to the right. It'll take some doing but, like any true simulation, once you start to get the knack your new found confidence will slowly show up on the scoreboard.





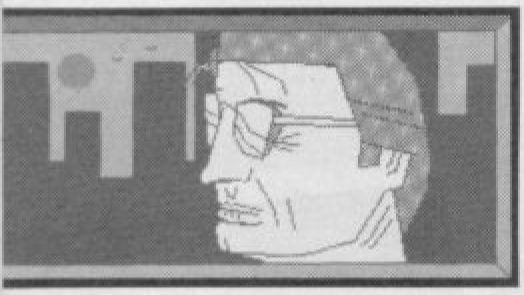
You don't have to play League bowls – in groups – you can play with a number of individuals – Open Bowls – or by yourself. There's no player-versus-computer option, which is a great misfortune, but I s'pose you can play amongst yourselves one after another in various personas.

If you can live with yourself, and the odd friend who may stumble into your computer area and deigns to move a character around the screen go for it. If, however, you can wait until **Indoor Sports,** from Advance, is released you can choose between the two packages. From what I've seen, the latter'll take a lot of beating in terms of price and quality, but *10th Frame* ain't exactly naff■


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BUDGET £1·99 £2·99 REVIEW

MATT LUCAS



Good to see another decent budget adventure title. This time it's from Players and its been written using Incentive's **Graphic Adventure Creator**.

Matt Lucas, PI is set in Florida, the centre of the world's drugs trade. It's a tough place for a private investigator to eek out a living. Your partner, John Harpinger, has been kidnapped by a gang of dope peddlars and you've got to find him.

You're on good terms with the local cops, It's Davis, Cosby and Deringer and, if you can spot them, there are the clues the gang left behind, but your car's broken down by the side of the road and the city just don't look the same on foot.

From the breakdown site you have two choices. Either go south and walk along the gusty cliffs, looking down at the beach or head into town where you'll find you pal's pad and the downtown precinct. Harpinger's place is locked up so take a look at his desk down at police HQ. The game's detailed, swiftly drawn, picture of the desk shows a computer and two software packages by its side, neither of which are the blindest use.

In the drawer you'll find a hairpin – this mate of yours is pretty strange – and of course you know what to do with it. Go back to Harpinger's place, pick the lock with the hairpin and get the floppy disc he's hidden amongst his personal effects. Go back to the precinct, load the disc into the computer and a map of Florida's seedier dives is drawn on the screen.

From there on quality of the locales continues to dive – you get to go to some real dodgy dives. Most of the plot solutions rely on simple object transposition, such as finding and taking the hairpin to the flat, finding the disc and taking it back to the precinct.

The text parser is also a simple verb/noun affair, straight from the **Graphic Adventure Creator** which even makes a guest appearance at the precinct.

You get a lot for £1.99. This is one of the better Players efforts. The company hasn't been able to hit the Mastertronic standard of quality yet, but Matt Lucas marks a change for the better. Good quality low rent adventuring ■

FACTS BOX

Simple graphic adventure with a reasonably inventive plot, full of gut grabbing suspense.

MATT LUCAS
Label: Players
Author: Alex Williams
Price: £1.99

Reviewer: John Gilbert

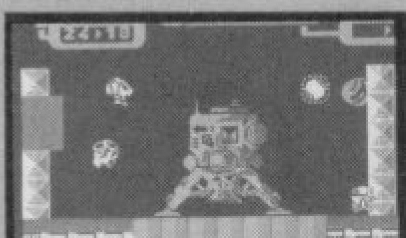
★★★★★

ANFRACTUOUS

Deep space destruction on a budget scale. Sounds promising if you're a fan of maze games but if you're also a big budget buyer be warned, **Anfractuous** is a mish-mash of plot ideas, maze graphic techniques and uninspiring alien blobs.

You are a robot with very short legs – and a very small brain – who's run out of fuel and had to dump his space ship on an unexploded planet called **Anfractuous.** The spaceship, an Apollo lunar lander no doubt taken from the NASA scrap yard, needs eight cans of fuel, which you've got to find before the aliens take your four lives.

There's a big problem. You get to some of the game's screen's through one-way suction tunnels. Once you're through you can't escape. So, even if you go right and enter the spaceship screen you will be unable to escape, unless you've got the fuel cannisters to launch the craft.



There's more. You're a danger to yourself because your laser shoots out through your back. If the blasts don't hit an alien they'll bounce back at you off the maze walls and blast some of your life energy away.

You have just over 25 minutes to find the eight energy cannisters but the aliens' strength usually ensures that you'll never survive that long. Luckily the Severn brothers – the programmers – have included a couple of energy energising machines. They're few and far between so map the game and take note of each machine's position. Sound's tedious, and indeed it is.

Anfactuous resembles the NASA lander which is at its core. It's a piece of space dross with pretentions to originality.

There's a bundle of them out there already and this one's not going to make my advances ■

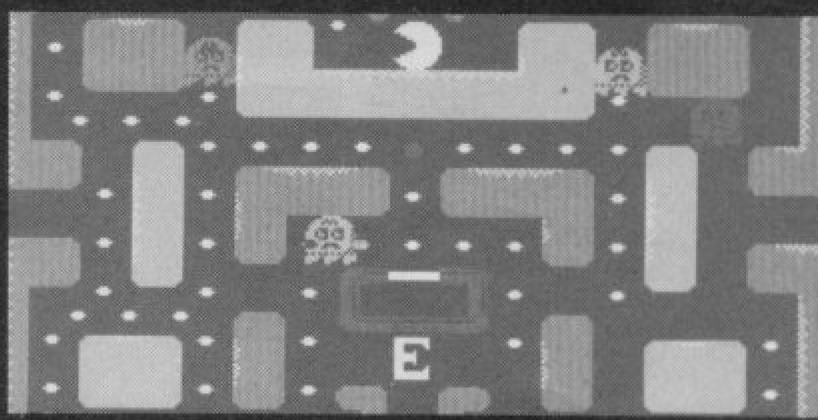
FACTS BOX

Feeble attempt at space age originality. Relies on hackneyed concepts. No real effort to be inventive

ANFRACTUOUS
Label: Players
Authors: Andy and Martin Severn
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Kempston

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★☆☆



MUNCHER

Bubble Bus must be off its trolley if it thinks that it can get away with a range of budget products which includes rip-offs of **Space Invaders** and **Pacman**. Yet that is what its new Minibus range proposes.

The first release is **Muncher,** a version of **Pacman** which I'm sure Atari won't be overly keen to see – I think they stopped threatening legal action over **Pacman** clones three years ago, so maybe Bubble Bus is safe. Its bold irregular graphics and familiar chomping sound kept me playing for all of ten minutes during which time I managed to eat my way through five levels of power pills and kill over thirty flickering ghosts. The better you get, the more screens you clear and the fewer turn-ghosts-into-muncher-food pills you get. It's not that exciting, though.

If you've just got a Spectrum or don't have a version of the classic **Pacman** you might want to look in your pocket for loose change and add it to your library. You're not likely to find a better version of the game floating around principally because it's back in the stone age of games design ■

FACTS BOX

Resurrection of a classic coin-op – four years ago! Could prove fatal to Bubble Bus' budget range

CLASSIC MUNCHER
Label: Bubble Bus
Author: Nick Jones
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★☆☆☆

STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

LEADERBOARD

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC

The golf course is water logged, but that's cool because most of the holes in this simulation are played across water.

There are four courses, similar in structure but different in difficulty level, a maximum four players can putt, birdie and generally make fools of themselves. Each course is in perspective 3D with the player – looking like a British Rail guard, peaked cap and all – at the bottom of the screen swinging a club.

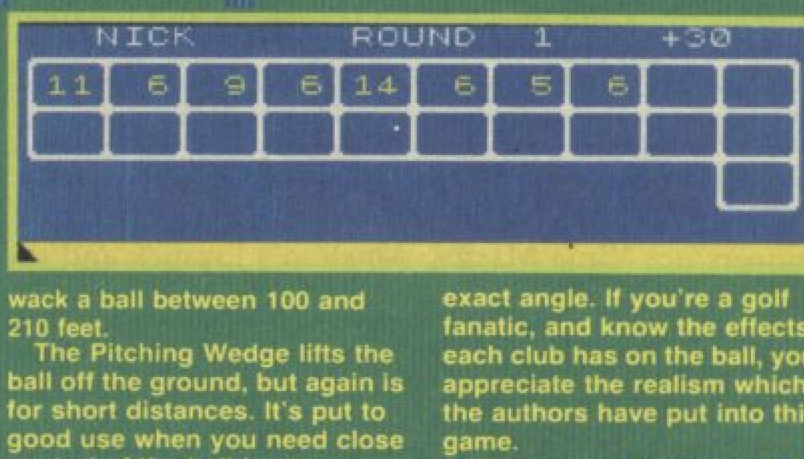
Before you can tee off at the first hole you've got to declare your ability. Novice play takes place in a vacuum. There's no wind, the ball is not hooked so that it curves across the ground, and it's not sliced so that it falls short on the green or in the water. At Amateur level hooking and slice come into effect, but there's still no wind. Professional level, and the full blown simulation takes off – along with your ball. You'll have to compensate for wind strength and direction, have perfect judgement in placing the ball on the green and be comfortable with the putter club, otherwise your putts'll be short or skim the rim of the hole and bounce out.

You can choose to play 18, 36, 54 or 72 holes, but your decision affects the order in which you can play the four courses. If you select more than 18 holes – an average sized course by any allowance – you can play them in any order by typing in 2 3 1 4, 4 1 2 3 *et al*, when asked. To play the same course four times just repeat its number on that option, 3 3 3 3.

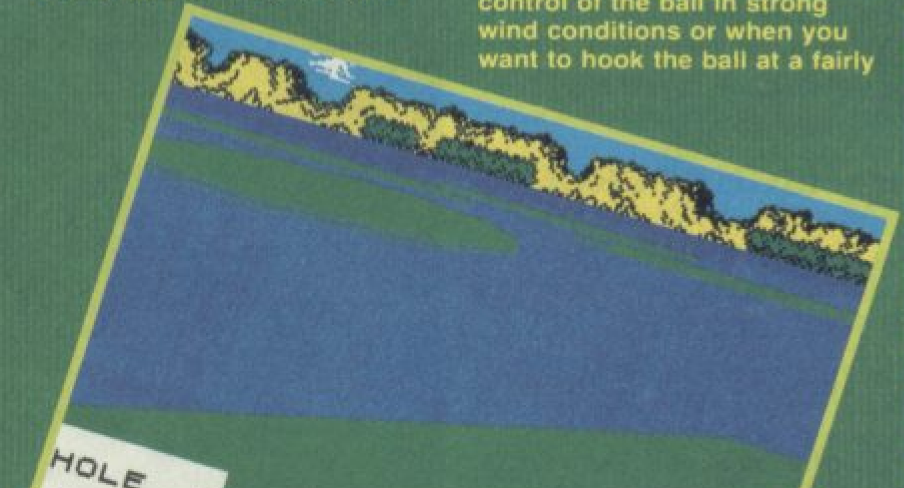
The bad news is the 3D views of each fairway and hole are drawn in approx 10 seconds, which makes the game interminably lengthy. The good news is they could be worth the wait. They're realistic in a blocky sort of way and the scene created by the ball gliding through the air is reminiscent of those lazy days of autumn when the sunlight steams through the trees and you're indoors watching the telly golf (leave it out – Ed).

When the ball lands the scene's viewpoint changes and, hopefully, you get a nearview of the hole – with cardboard stiff flag. If you land in the water, and there's a lot of it, you take the shot again, but also take a penalty.

Each player has a selection of 14 clubs; three woods, nine irons, a Pitching Wedge and a Putter. The woods send the ball the furthest, an average 271 feet for a one or 234 for a five wood. Irons are for shorter distances. A two iron, for instance can wack a ball between 100 and 210 feet.



The Pitching Wedge lifts the ball off the ground, but again is for short distances. It's put to good use when you need close control of the ball in strong wind conditions or when you want to hook the ball at a fairly exact angle. If you're a golf fanatic, and know the effects each club has on the ball, you'll appreciate the realism which the authors have put into this game.



Club swings are controlled by the power snap facility which builds up force and direction in the same way as when you're bowling in US Gold's Tenth Frame. When you are ready to make a shot the general power snap indicator appears on the screen. Press the *Fire* button on the joystick and the bar chart builds to maximum power. Release the button to stop the build up and the indicator starts moving from max hook, where the ball goes left, to max slice where it goes right. Press the *Fire* button again when you're satified with the ball angle.

Once you've played the distance and are on the green, near the hole, the computer acts as auto caddy and gives you a Putter. The Snap indicator is, of course, different here as there's no need for hook slice. Just tap the ball, but again be careful because the power measurement is on a different scale. Even if the bar thrusts through half the chart the ball will only travel a few feet.

I score Leader Board as a straight five under par, and it's heading for a course record where simulations are concerned. It's the best golf simulation yet. It may not be the fastest game on the circuit but it's the most enthralling■

FACTS BOX

Real 3D golf, not puny putting. Five under par for Leader Board, it'll take the simulation market by storm

LEADER BOARD
Label: US Gold
Author: Access
Price: £8.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★★

1986 POLL P

Rumours hung in the SU offices like a particularly unpleasant fog bank. Who would walk away with the prestigious titles? Who would be voted div of the year? Who had to open all the entries? After much tearing of envelopes and writing down of votes, we are proud to present the results of the Sinclair Users Readers' Poll, 1986. So without further ado, it's over to the Green Room in Farringdon for the results.

Best overall Program of 1986: STAR GLIDER (Rainbird)

Runners up: **Uridium, The Great Escape** and **Gauntlet.**

Comments: Late-comer ***Star Glider*** *scoops the award for Rainbird while other, more noisily announced games are left floundering in the lower areas.*

Peripheral of the Year: SPECDRUM (Cheetah)

Runners up: Opus Disc Drive, Multiface 1, AMX Mouse.

Comments: Gremlin's tip for the top, Thingi, failed miserably. Joysticks received moderate support. Anarchic wits suggested the Royal Wedding. Oh dear.

Most Exciting Software House: ELITE

Runners up: Ocean, Hewson, US Gold.

Comments: Ever-prolific Elite took the award for being "brave" enough to attempt ***Space Harrier*** *and not making too bad a job of it, really.*

Programmer of the Year: STEPHEN CROW (Hewson)

Runners up: Keith Burkhill, Bo Jangeborg and Jonathan Smith.

Comments: Mr Firelord wins hands down. Our very own Jon Riglar got many a mention for reasons that escape us. Anita Sinclair kept cropping up too . . .

Worst Product of 1986: WORLD CUP CARNIVAL (US Gold)

Runners up: **Ninja Master,** Amstrad's Joystick and the 128K+2

Comments: **Canival** finally gets the recognition it deserves and thus makes a rare blot on US Gold's otherwise spotless copybook. Also present were the entirely sound Lenslock System and Ocean's **Donkey Kong.**

Best Soundtrack of a Game: GLIDER RIDER (Argus Press)

Runners up: **Ping Pong, Cobra** and **Fairlight II**

Comments: What happened to the splendid ***Zub*** *then? Chirpy Cockney Sam Fox for her* ***Strip Poker*** *nominated by someone with their priorities twisted (?)*

Best Graphics in a Game: LIGHT FORCE (Faster Than Light)

Runners up: **Uridium, Great Escape, Dan Dare**

Comments: Killing is obviously back in fashion, especially if it's nice to look at. No surprise here. QL ***Karate*** *raised an eyebrow or two, though.*

Best Adventure Game: HEAVY ON THE MAGIC (Gargoyle)

Runners up: **The Boggit, Price of Magic** and **Vera Cruz.**

Comments: Two in a row for Gargoyle. Even distribution between "real" adventures and those on the periphery. ***Lord of the Rings*** *scraped by in an acceptable number.*

Best Toolkit Program: GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR (Incentive)

Runners up: **Art Studio, Artist II, Super Toolkit III**

Comments: Minimal votes for text-adv-gen ***The Quill*** *compared to GAC. Compilers and the rest picked up the floating votes.* ***Technician Ted*** *made a guest appearance.*

Best Arcade Game: URIDIUM (Hewson)

Runners up: **Gauntlet, Lightforce, Space Harrier**

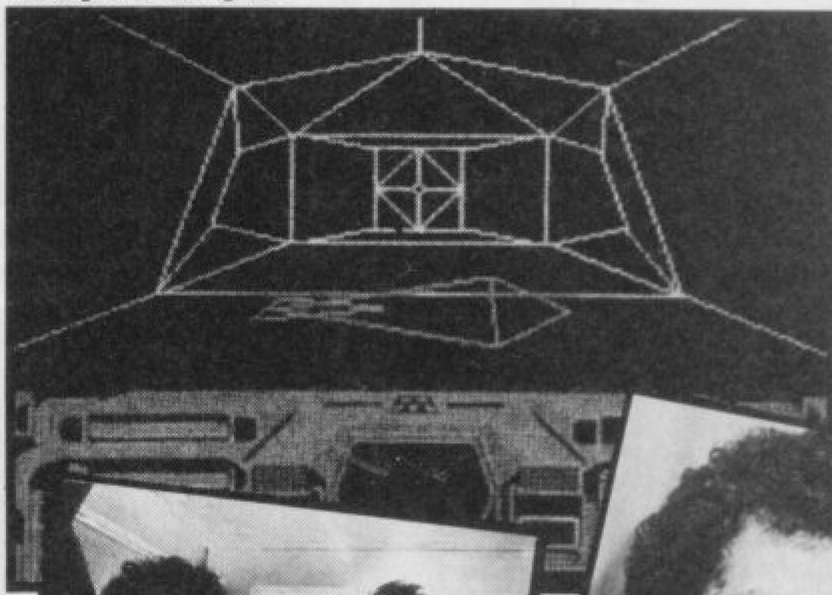
Comments: ***Uridium*** *takes the award from* ***Lightforce.*** *Gameplay more important than graphics?* ***Jet Set Willy*** *and* ***World Cup Carnival*** *(!) were also suggested.*

Best Film: TOP GUN (Tom Cruise, Kelly McGillis

Runners up: **Aliens, Back to the Future, Rocky IV**

Comments: Gung-ho-go-for-it beats the equally violent although more sound space sequel. Crackpot racism in the superb Year of the Dragon depleated its appeal.

▼ *Starglider – best game*





▲ *Aliens – best film*

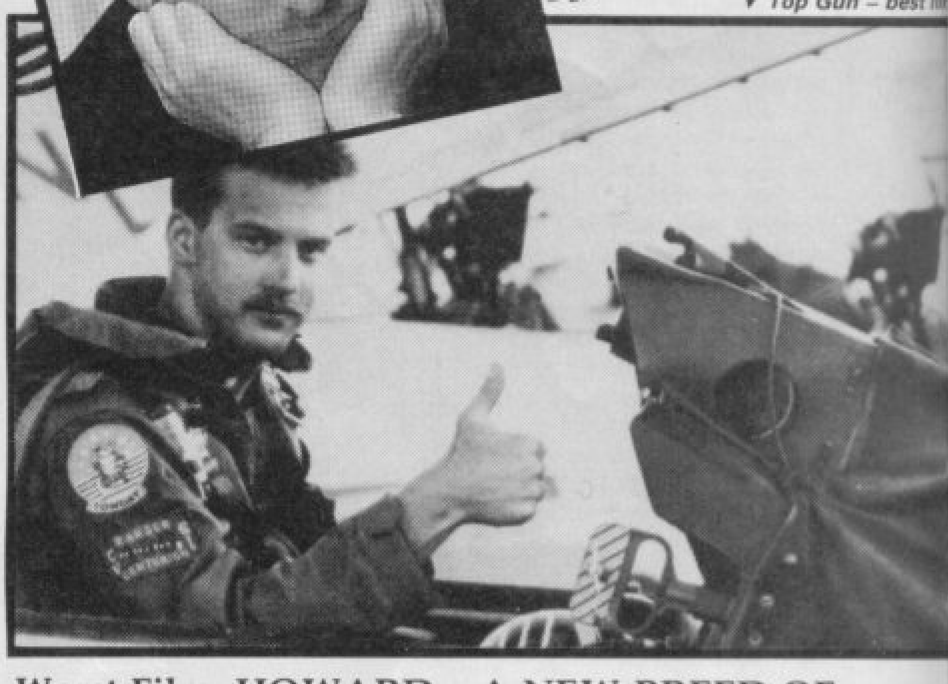


▼ *Alan Sug... dressed in...*



◄ *Sir CLive – div of the year*

▼ *Top Gun – best fi...*



Worst Film: HOWARD – A NEW BREED OF HERO (A styrofoam duck)

Runners up: **Top Gun, Cobra, Labyrinth, Shanghai Surprise**

Comments: Not all bodes well for Activision's next release. The ill-fated Surprise made a predictable appearance along with the spectacularly awful Creepers.

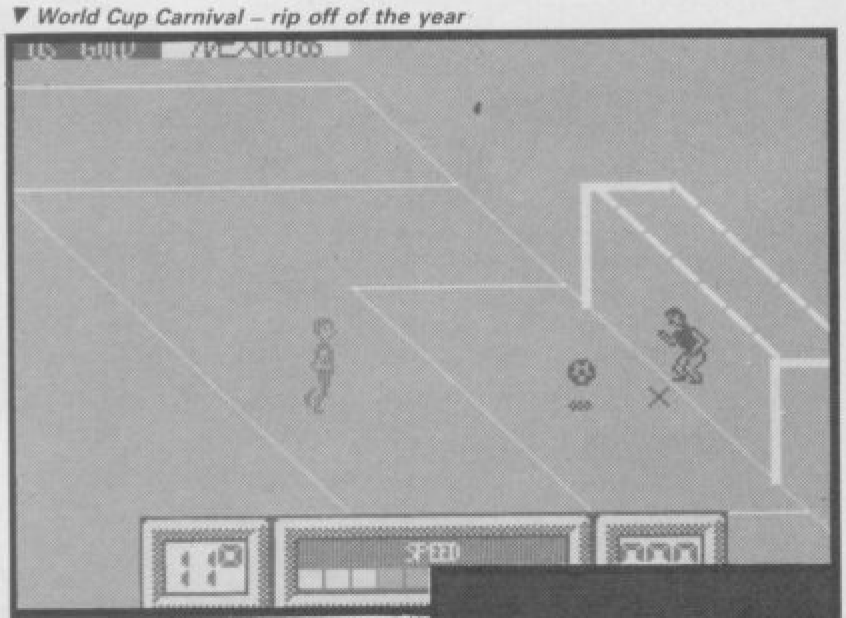
Best LP: QUEEN – A KIND OF MAGIC

Runners up: **Brothers in Arms** (Dire Straits), **Slippery When Wet** (Bon Jovi), **True Blue** (Madonna)

Comments: Middle-of-the-road Sun City playing oldsters top yuppie musos, weirdos and the rather pleasant although preposterously un-cool Mrs Penn.

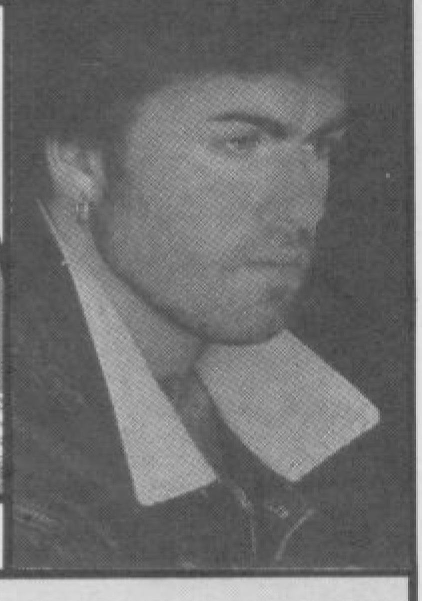
POSITIONS!

▼ World Cup Carnival – rip off of the year

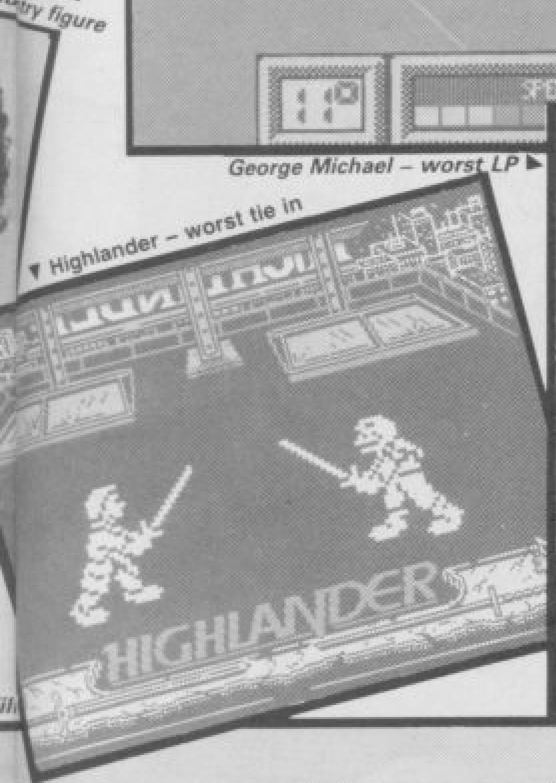


...– best ...ry figure

George Michael – worst LP ▶



▼ Highlander – worst tie in





Worst LP: WHAM! THE FINAL

Runners up: **True Blue** (Madonna), **Notorious** (Dur Dur), **Now 8** (Various), **Flaunt It** (Sputnik).
Comments: George'n'Andy drive (unsteadily) into the sunset with a turkey on the back seat. Further down the road are Elaine Page, Aled Jones and Sam Fox

Best Strategy/Wargame: THEATRE EUROPE (PSS)

Runners up: **Napoleon at War, Samurai** and **Trivial Pursuit**
Comments: Simulated nuclear war is comfortingly popular, followed closely by impersonating short French men and pretending to be good at general knowledge.

What colour should the +2 have been? BLACK

Runners up: Blue, red, white and grey
Comments: Imaginative as ever, black was the order of the day. Surprisingly, there wasn't a single vote for 40% blue with green and ochre triangles.

Best QL Software: GRAPHICS TOOLKIT (Talent)

Runners up: **QL Chess, The Wanderer, Better Magic**

Rip-off of the Year: WORLD CUP CARNIVAL (US Gold).

Runners up: **Dragon's Lair, Knight Rider** and the Amstrad joystick
*Comments: **World Cup Carnival** by far the least popular effort this year from US Gold. Amstrad lost many fans with their riduculously opportunistic joystick idea.*

Most Horrific Licence Deal: HIGHLANDER (Ocean)

Runners up: Sinclair sell-out, **Knight Rider** and **Friday 13th.**
*Comments: Ocean has yet to produce a brilliant licence deal except **Great Escape** . Domark appears to have learnt its lesson.*

Best Licence Deal: ALIENS (Electric Dreams)

Runners up: **Gauntlet, Cobra, Paper Boy.**
*Comments: Well-deserved success for the game of the sequel of the film. **Cobra** makes a surprise appearance.*

Most attractive programmer: ANITA SINCLAIR (Magnetic Scrolls).

Runners up: Clare Edgeley and Steve Crow.
Comments: Marginal confusion over exactly what a programmer is. Exasperating votes like "any female" were a little too common, thank you very much.

Div of the Year: CLIVE SINCLÁIR for selling out.

Runners up: Jon Riglar, Alan Sugar, British Gas Sid and Maggie T.
Comments: Woa. Yeh, Uprising. Down with Thatch and the Tories. Riglar's 2nd place is obviously erroneous. Elsewhere Nick Kamen was nearly as unpopular as Ediwna Curry . . .

Most unforgivable Marketing Concept of 19867: SINCLAIR SELLOUT

Runners up: **World Cup Carnival** and the +2
Comments: Oversized cassette boxes made an entirely justified showing as did the entirely reliable tape deck on the +2.

Character Who You Most Enjoy Watching Die: JET SET WILLY

Runners up: Berk and Wally Week.

Least Impressive New Software House: ALPHA OMEGA.

Runners up: Players, Sparklers and Piranha
Comments: None too encouraging reception for Alpha Omega, closely followed by Bug Byte and the fresh-faced novices at Mikro-Gen.

Best Dressed Industry Figure: ALAN SUGAR

Sir Clive, Andrew Hewson and David Kelly.
Comments: Obviously completely unfair and uncomprehesive. Where were the sartorially elegant Fergus McNeill and Tony Crowther? And why on earth Kelly?

Adventure with the Smallest Vocabulary: ZZZZ (Mastertronic)

Runners up: **Hunchback the Adventure** and **Quest for the Orange Peel.**

Dullest Arcade Game: KUNG FU MASTER.

Runners up: **Ninja Master, Breakthru** and **Donkey Kong.**

Most Ridiculous Event of 1986: SINCLAIR SELLOUT

Runners up: Royal Wedding, This competition and the Micro Fairs.
Comments: Oo. Anti-Royalist dissent. The C5, Nick Berry's No 1 and Bobby's return in Dallas were up there too. World famine and war hardly featured . . . ■

SU is 5

We've bin together naw for five long yearssah an it don seem ar dayee toooo longah. All together now. SU is five years old (although there are some who would say it is even more juvenile than that.)

In those five years SU has changed quite a lot. So has the industry. So, doubtless have you (if you've been reading us that long). What hasn't changed is our dumbfounding, astonishing generosity.

Are we mad? Have we gone crazy? Do we mean it? How can we afford it? (Answers No, No, Yes and Ocean are paying for it).

So check out the prizes in this the Fifth Anniversary Mega Competition:

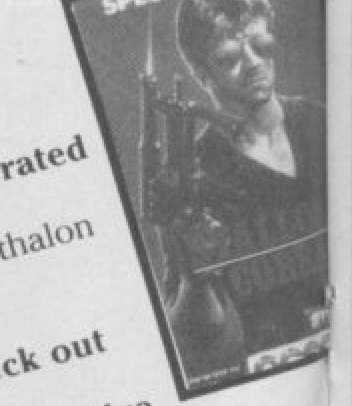
The Prizes

SU has prepared in conjunction with Ocean five utterly exclusive mega packs which constitute a history of software – some of the greatest games in the history of the world, some historical curiosities, maybe even a few dodos, but mostly the most all inclusive, definitive, possibly even peculiar collection of titles you've ever seen.

Minions sent scurrying down into the top secret Ocean warehouse have prepared twenty mega packs containing the following ten titles:

Transversion (Remember this one? We don't)
Kong (The original one)
Cavelon (Not to be confused with Avalon which is by Roxy Music)
Eskimo Eddie (A lot of white sprites)
Pogo (A mouse we think)
Kong Strikes Back (Ape meets funfair)
Roland Rat (Much underrated licence)
Daley Thompson's Decathalon (Need we say more)
Cobra (Recent hit)
Head over Heels (Check out previews)

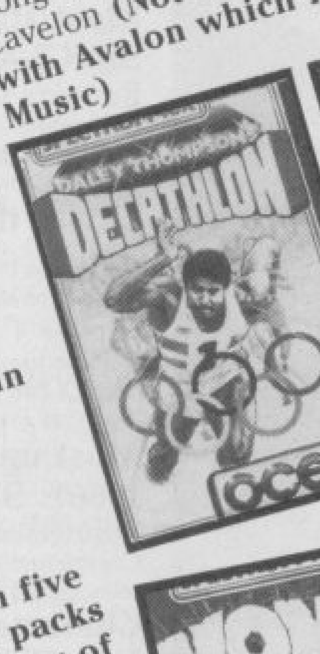
With Twenty packs to give away you stand a real chance of coming away with a crate full of goodies. So what do you have to do?

















The Competition

Below is a list of significant events in the five year history of this great industry of ours. They are not in historical order.

Decide what the order of events should be and enter in the letter of each event, in sequence, in the coupon below. For example, if you think that event C was the first one put that in the first box and so on.

The Events

A Spectrum launched
B Sinclair sells out to Amstrad
C Release of Knight Lore
D Oric launched
E The Hobbit released
F Sinclair User Nov 86 edition

What to do

Fill your answers in below. Send the completed coupon to 'Special Celebratary Five Years Anniversary competition Involving SU And Ocean And I Bet Not Many Of You Will Write Out The Whole Thing But Let's Try It Anyway' Competition, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Entries to reach us by 30th April

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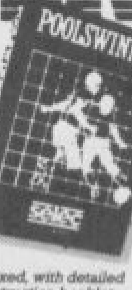
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C.O.D.E. T.A.L.K.

Greg Follis is, along with, Roy Carter (Roysten to his friends) Faster Than Light. Faster than Light is, in another guise, Gargoyle and between the two companies they have created such programming gems as Tir Na Nog, and Lightforce. Clearly a multi-faceted individual we put Greg in a corner and pointed a table lamp in his eyes



Greg Follis
Age 39

It was 1968, when I first saw a computer. It was an ICL1900 which filled a 40 foot room and had 8K. I was working for a commercial bed manufacturer at the time! For the first four weeks I had to work at night feeding in 160,000 punched cards. . .

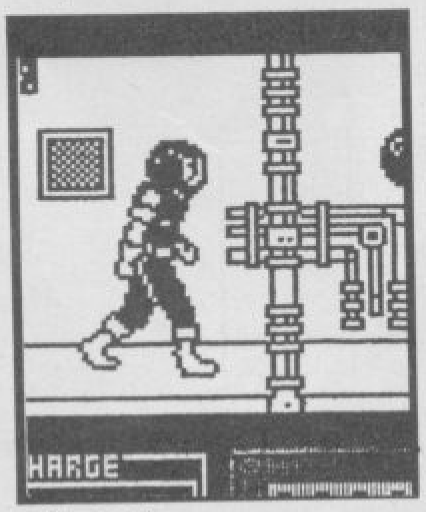
The first language I learnt was Plan which is ICL's standard low level language rather like assembly language. Over the next few years I gradually learnt more just by trial and error and making mistakes. I became a Systems Analyst and joined up with Royston. We became the R+D department and started designing systems and languages.

I think the best way to learn is just to use the reference manuals and try things, make lots of mistakes and let your enthusiasm drive you on. I stayed with the bed company until I left to do Gargoyle 1985.

The first program I wrote was pretty boring. It was a cost/sales analysis program that worked out how much things cost. Roysten and I went on to create a program called **Omen,** which we're still pretty proud of and is in fact still marketed as **Omen+** by ICL and others. It's pretty boring though — an on-line real-time development and production tool.

Vital Details

Which other programmers do you admire?
I really liked the original Ultimate team, I don't know who they were, just that Tim Stamper was involved. I know the products though and that is good enough for me.
Favourite Programs?
Well, even though it's ancient, I still like Pacman for its sheer simplistic enjoyment. I also like the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, **although I still haven't got past the Babel Fish — I did once but I've forgotten how I did it. Finally, I like martial arts games like** International Karate.
What arcade game do you get the highest scores on?
The Star Wars **cabinet game — I used to be able to chock up a good six figure score on that. More recently** Space Harrier **has caught my attention, and if I spend enough money on it I can get some good scores on that.**
What program would you most like to have written?
Trivial Pursuit, **it was a difficult job which was converted in a thoroughly professional and entertaining way.**
Greatest programming achievement?
Well it might be one of the serious projects I've worked on but on the home computer side I think as a total Heavy on the Magick **is the best thing I've been involved with.**



▲Marsport

Programming ambition
To create an intelligent program. It's an idea we've been working on for four or five years — and the ultimate objective is to simulate human thought processes. We have a thing called the George project which is underway being developed on a PCW that might bear some fruit this year and there might be some sort of Spectrum version next year.
Favourite TV
I loath TV mostly but I do like Fawlty Towers, and recently Miss Marple has had me pretty addicted.
Favourite film
Commando, Rocky IV and all the Star Wars films. I also like Clockwork Orange very much, but I haven't seen it in ages.
Favourite record
Of recent stuff I think it's Dire Straits Brothers in Arms album. Of the older material, Supertramp were big favourites.
Favourite books
Almost all science fiction. Also Len Deighton and Robert Ludlum among spy writers, and sometimes I even like to read books on Computing!!
Worst program that also did well?
Lord of the Rings. **It began badly when the first thing you find in the game is some photos stuck on a wall — this was not very good for atmosphere.**
Hobbies
I'm quite keen on Martial Arts. I got a brown belt in Karate although I haven't done much recently, I generally enjoy most sports.
Worst subject at School
There were two. History — so God knows how we managed to do things like Tir Na Nog and Science. They wouldn't let me take O levels in either Chemistry of Physics. I was so bad?
Best thing about the Spectrum
It's simplicity. Because there is so little provided on the machine you are able to do what you want. On something like the Commodore, which has facilities like sprites, you actually find they get in the way and stop you from doing things.
Worst thing about the Spectrum
Its simplicity — you get no help and the sound is terrible.
Coming up:
We have a lot of commercial work to do this year but we will do some games later on this year. I'd quite like to do some more with some of the ideas behind Shockway Rider, **not the game ideas but the plot ideas — I like the concept of the street gangs. Another idea is to do a new Gargoyle Games project based on The Hunting of the Snark by Lewis Caroll. It would be a completely new style of game and not look like any of the previous ones. That would be intended for about October.**

SOFTOGRAPHY: Ad Astra (*Gargoyle,* 1984) Tir Na Nog (*Gargoyle,* 1984) Dun Daurach (*Gargoyle,* 1985) Marsport (*Gargoyle,* 1985) Sweevo's World (*Gargoyle,* 1985) Heavy on the Magick (*Gargoyle,* 1986) Scooby Doo (Elite) (*Elite,* 1986) Lightforce (*Faster Than Light,* 1986) Shockway Rider (*Faster Than Light,* 1987)

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AIRWAVES

A new series of *The Prisoner*, the cult show of the 60's, could be on the box by next year.

The show features Patrick McGoohan in the title role again. At the beginning of the first series he was stripped of his identity and shipped to a mysterious place called the Village. the Village becomes his prison. He's given the number six as an identity. The jailer - Number Two changes personality each episode and eventually aids The Prisoner in escaping the village. Number six finally fights Number One, an even shadowier individual (possibly himself), and assumes his identity.

Sources in the States confirm that McGoohan is working on a new script. The new series is likely to be filmed in the US. At the start of this new show The Prisoner discovers that the whole world is The Village . . . (Oh no, not that old plot.)■

JOHN GILBERT

COMICS 'N' MAGS

In the US home of comic book super-heroes, something nasty's bubbling in the swamp – yeah, it's Swamp Thing! Our American cousins have something called the comic code, self-imposed censorship by which all the big comic publishers agree not to produce things that might deprave impressionable youngsters. Horror's out, nice is in, which makes for boring comics.

Meanwhile, in the UK, IPC has 2000AD – *all blood and guts, but exciting. Let's face it, if you had to choose between* Superman *(Truth, Justice and the American Way)* and Judge Dredd *(Look into the fist of Dredd) which would you go for? Lo and behold, the Americans got wind of* 2000AD, *and* DC Comics *lured* Alan Moore, *one of* Judge Dredd*'s creators, away. He started working on a series called* Swamp Thing, *about a mass of swamp vegetation that generally wandered abround doing good. Mr Moore transformed* Swamp Thing *into one of the strangest and most interesting comics around.*

We are talking strange ideas here – in one of the latest issues our hero, a disembodied intelligence drifting through space, is raped by an island. Don't ask how – just read it.

BOOKS

Thrud the Barbarian, the almost naked bone head of *White Dwarf's* comic strip, rips, mangles and mutilates his way through a large format, glossy paperback, recently released by Games Workshop.

The strips in the book, which costs £3.95, are all *White Dwarf* repeats, but that doesn't stop them being hilarious. The most comic is a series of strips entitled *The Three Tasks of Thrud*. He has some Herculean jobs to do, but always manages to kill thousands of innocent swineheards while doing them. He even manages to slash the arm of his own artist. The blood . . .■

JOHN GILBERT



If you have any taste for heroic fantasy get hold of a copy of *The Anvil of Ice* immediately. Michael Scott Rohan has written the finest fantasy novel for years.

The setting is Earth, some time in the far distant past, when the world is in the grip of the Ice Age. Magic and magical beasts exist, as do dwarves – neatly explained as the last survivors of Home Neanderthalis.

When his village is destroyed by barbarian raiders, the hero of the book, Aiv, is apprenticed to the Mastersmith – metal-working and magic are closely intertwined in this world.

As he learns the magical skills of metal moulding, he also discovers things about his smith master, and flees after finishing the final test he needs to pass to become a journeyman. In passing that test, Aiv betrays a friend and loses his magical powers. The rest of the book follows Aiv's progress, first as he searches for his lost powers, then as he uses his skills against his former master. The grand conclusion to the novel is everything that could be desired, and the way in which Aiv defeats his own magic in the form of a sword he has created – is neatly done.

My only quibble concerns the conclusion's bevy of loose ends, but I look forward to the next book in what we are promised will be a series. There's no doubt that the book will be the basis of an adventure game at some point – it just cries out for computerisation■

VIDEO OF THE MONTH

The **Karate Kid Part II** (Ralph Macchio, Noriyuki, RCA Columbia).

In a far lighter tale than last month's video, Macchio and Morita return as the all-American kid Daniel and the wordly wise karate intructor Miyagi. It is six months since Daniel triumphed in tournament when we pick up the story.

Returning to Okinawa to visit Miyagi's dying father, Daniel finds himself caught up in a deadly feud between Miyagi and an old friend turned adversary, Sato.

Daniel ends up having to protect his mentor from Sato and his nephews and falling in lurve with a local girl in the process. (Statutory love interest.)

Macchio does a fine job despite being at odds with some occasionally ropey dialogue and although it's all pretty lightweight, KKII provides an entertaining, albeit safe romp into mainstream martial arts; action, philosophy, honour *et al.* Certainly worth a look, maybe as a double bill with No 1■

JIM DOUGLAS



TOP TEN ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

1) **Dungeons and Dragons (TSR)**
2) **Paranoia (West End Games)**
3) **Call of Cthulu (Games Workshop)**
4) **Mech Warrior (FASA)**
5) **Traveller 2300 (GDW)**
6) **Middle Earth (ICE)**
7) **Twighlight 2000 (GDW)**
8) **Marvel Superheroes (TSR)**
9) **Runequest (Games Workshop)**
10) **Warhammer (Games Workshop)**

Chart compiled by the perfectly topping peole at The Virgin Games Centre, Oxford Street, London. Probably the best RPG shop in the world . . . (How much did they pay us to say that? – Ed.)



ANDS



COIN-OP OF THE MONTH

Tatsumi's Lock-On is a fast action shoot'em up requiring nerves of steel, a sturdy trigger finger and lightening reflexes.

As a member of the Tatsumi airforce your job is to sweep the skies ridding your country of the invading enemy air and ground forces. The action doesn't give you a moment to even blink. As soon as your money is in the machine you come under attack from waves after waves of fighters while tanks and the like chuck missiles up at you with deadly accuracy.

The centre of the screen contains your sights – a grid in which you must hold the enemy while opening fire. If they manage to escape the grid, they'll be out of range so a fair bit of manoeuvring is neccessary before you can shoot ehtm down in flames. Every so often yellow squares lock on to approchaing aircraft and this is when you get your first warning from the computer. 'Lock On' – the command – means let loose the missiles which will home in on the captive aircraft leaving you free to blast everything else.

Ground forces are just as dangerous as the aircraft – more so because you tend to forget ther existence in the heat of a dogfight. These send up anti-aircraft shells which hurtle towards you at amazing speeds. As they are about to hit, a warning message pops up in the top corner of the screen but who has time to notice the writing on the wall in the middle of battle? You're more likely to notice the missile as it explodes on top of you

Bonus screens pop up at certain times offering a variety of different landscapes to fly and fight over. Just choose one of three windows (square!) and away you go.

Fast and addictive, Lock-On's a must for anyone who wants a bash at being a fighter pilotT

CLARE EDGELEY



TOP TEN COIN-OPS/APRIL

Out Run	Sega
Side Arms	Capcom
Championship Sprint	Atari
Nemesis	Konami
Soldier of Light	Technos
Valtric	Taito
Bubble Bubble	Taito
Street Football	Bally/Sente
Victory Road	SNK
Night Stocker	Bally Sente

This list is compiled with the help of one arcade in London's West End, and is not necessarily the case country-wide. Thanks to John Stergides of Electrocoin.

PERSONAL HI-FI

Pocket-sized hi-fi has been hot since the Sony Walkman hit the streets. But if you're a real cool dude you'll want to go one better than just having a tape-player in your pocket. Check you local electronics dealer for these:

- *The HITORI FM RADION is the size of a matchbox, picks up stations in the 88-108 MHz band, and comes with a mono earphone. So simple, it doesn't even have a volume control – but it's less than £10.*
- *If this weren't cloudy Britain you could even consider a solar-powered version, like the CLOUD SOLAR at £16.95. This one throws in AM radio too.*
- *You pay more for the name .. The SONY ICF 301 looks like a credit card but sounds a whole lot better; AM/FM radio at £49.95.*
- *If you want something to stick on your head, try the AIWA AM/FM STEREO HEADPHONE RADIO instead of a pair of ear muffs. Warm ears, great sounds at £78.85.*
- *Going up-market, the £95 SONY WMW800 is the world's only two-cassette walkman; imagine that! Dolby noise reduction and it records too.*
- *Further into the realms of "Wish I could afford that" is the SONY WMF107 SOLAR WALKMAN; looks like a scubadiver's backpack, runs of light or batteries, includes Dolby, and it's waterproof in case you fancy using it in the bath. Oh, but it's £169.50.*

★ *Right into the realms of the unaffordable, real hipsters are now into portable CD; those marvellous silver disks with the perfect sounds can be carried around in the TOSHIBA XRB9 from as little as – gulp – £200*■

CHRIS JENKINS

TOY FAIR '87

The 1987 Toy Fair at Earls Court was full of the sort of things you would expect. Believe it or not, people are buying and selling for next Christmas already.

Well, **Atari** has launched a new games console, the 65XE, complete with light-gun and add-on keyboard. Remember the old Atari games consoles? Well no they're back for a whole new generation! Me, I'd prefer a rubber key Spectrum. . .

The air was rent with the sounds of combat as Rambo and the Karate Kid battled it out. Yes, you too can shoot gooks and pulverise concrete with your bare plastic hands. And everything comes with optional add-on (ie you have to buy them) guns and bombs and rocket launchers and knives (big shiny ones) and other implements of destruction.

There's a new game out from the people who brought you Trivial Pursuits, called Ubi – it's kind of TP only all the questions revolve around the idea of 'Where' – everything



starts with 'Ubi. . .' and then you have to say where something happened. The physical components look excellent, but I'm not too sure about the game itself. Still, slap 'From the people who brough you Trivial Pursuit. . .' on the box and they'll sell a million.

Also very noticeable were the Destructobots and Randomodroids – you know, the things that change shape and function depending on how you feel. Zoids and Mask and Rats and dozens of other little mechanical horros battling it out for space on your local toyshop's shelves. . .

GARY ROOK

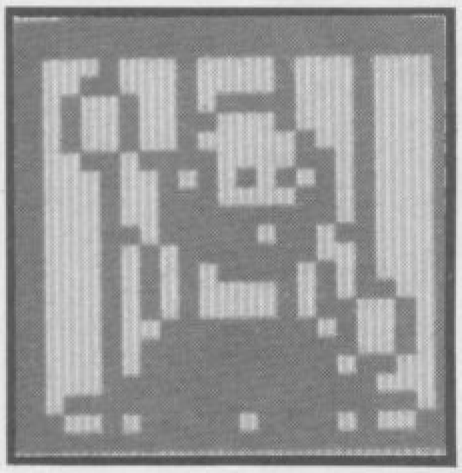
FANTASY/MOVIES



Masters of the Universe hits the big screen, with actors taking the part of the main characters, during the summer.

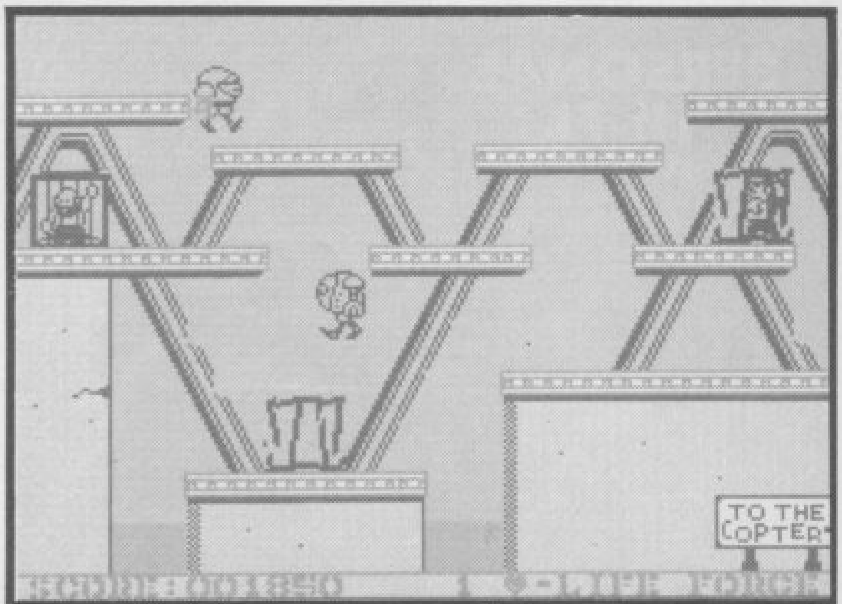
Dolph Lundgren, the Russian boxer in *Rocky IV* and Grace Jones ex-toyboy plays the lead as He-Man and Prince Adam. As usual he has to deal with Hordac with his Hordes, Skeletor with his sadistic torture devices, and a host of cartoon/computer generated special effects.





BUTCH HARD GUY

ARCADE REVIEW



FACTS BOX

Satisfasctory programming with some half-cocked humour to boot. Don't let the dreadful free badge put you off

BUTCH HARD GUY
Label: Advance
Author: Future Concepts
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: various

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★★☆

Butch Hard Guy, we are told, is one tough cookie. He's a Vietnam Vet with a bad haircut. His trousers are torn and he's got a grazed knee. Butch is obviously terribly hard.

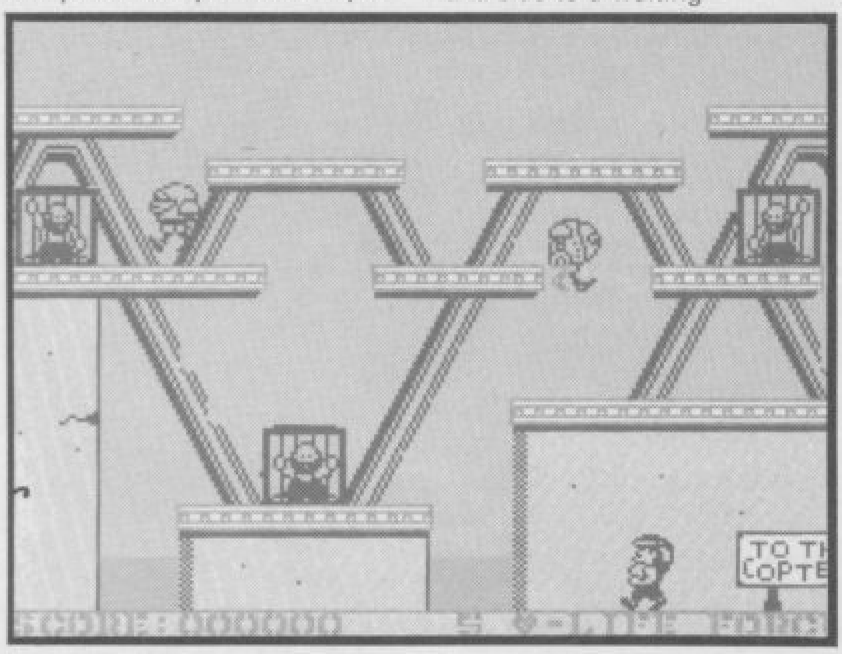
Advance, in all the excitement of constructing a parody of similar games seems to have become a little confused as to exactly who you are. During the blurb on the back of the box, it appears that you are some form of recruit and have to prove yourself to Butch. On the inside however, you *are* Butch.

Anyway, whoever you are, your mission is to rescue your fellow war vets from the altogether unsavoury Dr Tie Fu. (Oh dear.)

The World, we are informed, has been taken over by Dr Fu who has built loads of robots and prison camps. The camps are filled up with people in little cages and the robots guard them. Most of the action takes place in the South Pacific (cue useless music) where Fu's castle is situated.

The robots are coated in a very, very dangerous poison that will cause you to drop dead immediately on touching them. As with all androids constructed by insane villains, they can be destroyed by a well aimed kick etc, etc (though if kicking doesn't constitute touching, I don't know what does).

The prisoners can be seen in tiny cages looking suitably depressed. In order to free them, you must run to the cage and kick/punch it open. The prisoner will then run for all he's worth to the wrong side of the screen, bounce off the right hand side to a waiting helicopter.



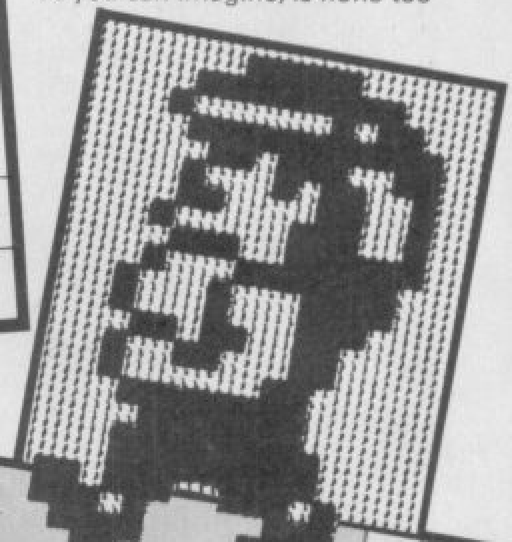
What we have here then is a cross between your standard platforms and levels game and a rather inadequate combat program.

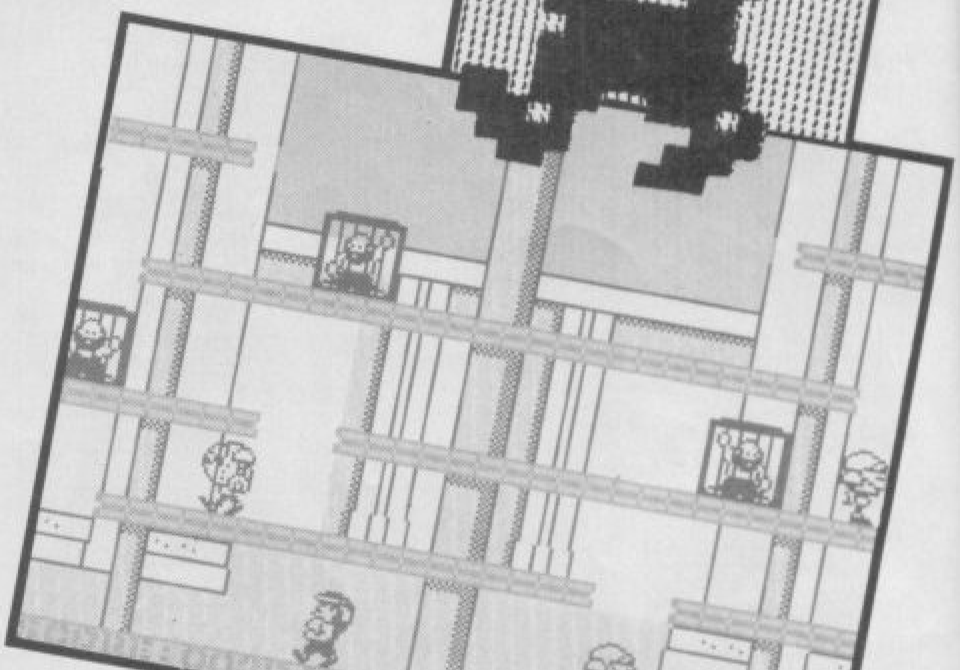
Despite this, it's actually all rather enjoyable.

There are twenty screens, each increasing in danger as you near Fu's castle.

Being obviously far too tough to require anything as girly as a gun, Butch hares around the screen (with quite surprising agility for someone so ludicrously muscular) somersaulting and diving like there's no tomorrow and hitting anything in sight.

Robots generally appear from the top of the screen and work their way down. As their movements are fairly predictable, it's possible to find yourself a temporarily safe location and wait for them to run toward you. A well-timed kick will send them pootling off in the other direction. Now you have to get out of the way before their innards collapse and the casing explodes. This, as you can imagine, is none-too safe although it can be used to your advantage by ensuring another robot is right behind the injured one. With any luck it will be destroyed in the explosion.





The sound is appropriately dreadful and there is an air of quirkyness about the whole thing.

It's a nice piece of programming, though, and offers enough longevity (it's pretty tough in some places) to prevent it being an over-expensive joke■

You'll flip over these flicker-free graphics

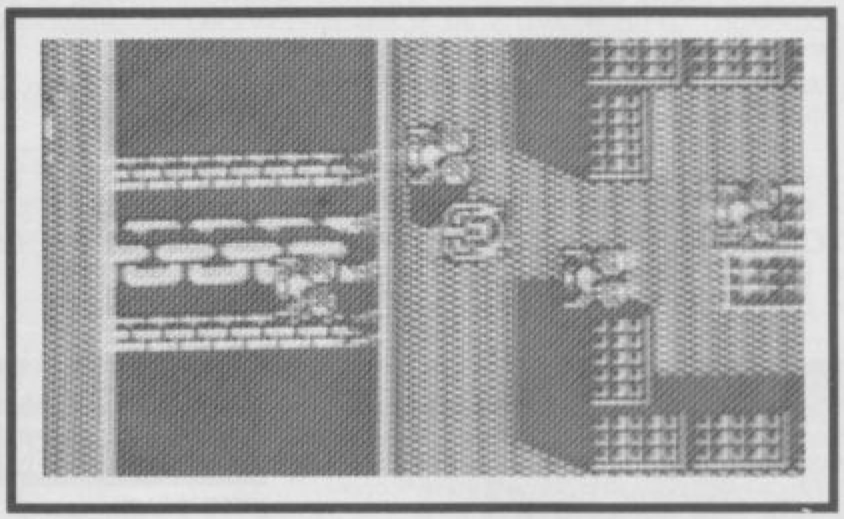
A bumper bundle of correspondence dropped through my letterbox this month to make up for last month's meagre offering. The variation in volume and content of the *Helpline* postbag continues to surprise me. Occasionally the number of letters falls and I begin to wonder if this heralds the beginning of the end for Sinclair computers or, more prosaically, the gently but determined phone call from the editor telling me that the *Helpline* must go. But each time your letters surge in again showing that the infuriating but fascinating group of Sinclair home computers continue to excite the interest of the outside world.

Derrick Dixon of Tyne and Wear, a regular reader apparently, asks **How is smooth character movement achieved without wastage of memory or loss of speed? Do you prefer the "dumping" method whereby 6K of memory is set aside upon which the desired characters are shifted about before the whole lot is sent to the display file via an LDIR? Or do you prefer to operate on the display file directly? Can you tell us some trade secrets?**

Starting with the last question first, Derrick, *the* trade secret is that there is *no* trade secret. There is nothing in all those clever commercial games which have the Spectrum performing all kinds of whizzo gymnastics which you or I or anyone else with enough time, patience, and talent couldn't do with our own machines. The point is obvious but it is worth stating baldly. When you buy a game you are only buying the instructions which put the machine through its paces. There is no fundamental reason why you shouldn't write those instructions yourself.

Getting on to Derrick's main question the decision to use a so-called "back screen" in which the picture is built-up before it is dumped to the real display file in preference to writing on the main screen alone is one that is usually made fairly early on in the design of a machine code game. There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches and, as the subject is interesting without being unduly complicated, it is worth explaining in detail.

Most readers will know that the Spectrum screen display is constructed from the information held in memory in the address range 16384 to 22527 inclusive. This area is referred to as the display file. The COLOUR and *Bright* and *Flash* information is held in the attributes area which



spans the address range 22528 to 23295. If you want to explore and have some fun try the following command *Poke* address, number where "address" is a whole number lying between 16384 and 22395 inclusive and "number" is a whole number lying between 0 and 255 inclusive. For even more fun put the command in a Basic loop, add a bit of *Rand*omness to the value of "number" and sit back and watch the multicolour screen effects.

How does the information in memory get transferred to the TV screen? We don't need to know in detail, but broadly the system is as follows. Fifty times per second the Spectrum hardware scans through the display file and attributes area in parallel and constructs an electronic signal from the contents. This electronic signal is fed by some complex jiggery-pokery to the electron gun which sits at the back end of the TV tube. The electron gun then "writes" the signal on the face of the tube causing the relevant colours to appear at the relevant places on the face of the tube and thereby constructing the picture that we see.

The electronic writing starts at the top left hand corner (when viewing the screen from the front), goes across horizontally to the far right, flys back to the left and drops down slightly, goes across horizontally to the far right again and so on all the way down the face of the screen. When the writing reaches the bottom right hand corner the screen picture is complete and the hardware prepares to do the job again a fiftieth of a second later. All this goes on more or less independently (I'm simplifying the story a bit for the sake of clarity) of the Z80 microprocessor.

Thus any particulary area of the screen gets written on by the electronic beam fifty times per second and the effect of the writing process is to get that area of the screen to light up in the required colour. As soon as the beam passes on as it sweeps down the screen, the area it has just left starts to fade and by the time the beam gets back again, a fiftieth of a second later, for its next sweep the picture has faded to about half of its peak intensity. Thus the screen picture is

Origin of the Poke explained

I have come to the conclusion that there must be a method of calculating a Poke to gain infinite lives or whatever in programs. If I am correct can you tell me the method? If there is no method how do people do it? Writes John Thrower.

Good question John. I couldn't think of of a general method of obtaining an infinite lives *Poke* myself so I had a word with a young hacker of my acquaintance. He reckoned that breaking the protection was often the most difficult step and I suppose I shouldn't be surprised at that because the protection is there to stop people dabbling.

Once you've done that then the next step is to disassemble the code looking for the calls to the Spectrum *Rst* which prints characters on the screen. When you've done that then a bit of detective work on teh code leading up to the *Rst* should tell you whereabout on the screen that printing is to take place. If it is as the location used to register your current lives then you know you've got to back track a bit more to locate the bit of code which decrements the 'lives remaining' counter.

Another technique is to study the disassembled code, looking for the game's equivalent of the Spectrum system variables. Depending on how the game is written these may or may not exist as a readily identifiable block, and the 'lives remaining' counter may or may not be somewhere away tucked inside. I am assured that hunting for *Pokes* is interesting detective work. My young hacker friend assures me that sometimes it is more fun than playing the game itself.

However, I confess to knowing next to nothing about chasing infinite lives *Pokes* because it's not the sort of thing I get to do every day. So let's hear about it from a few *Poking* Sinclair users. How *do* you do it? How long does it take? What is the best *Poke* you've ever discovered? A free game or two if you can come up with an interesting story on the subject, plus your name featured on this column. Go to it!

Are we sure this is all stricly legal?

Mike Waterfall of MAW Electronics in Redruth asks **What is the position in law now that Sinclair no longer produce Spectrums and the Rom in the 48K and the 128K series now carry the Amstrad copyright thereby changing the original Rom contents? Is it an infringement of copyright to duplicate the original Rom with a few minor changes e.g. the NMI bug sorted out and some extra material in the "empty" space starting at 386E (Hex)?**

An interesting point, Mike, I thought as I read your letter. Wouldn't it be nice if we could put that NMI error right since the manufacturers do not seem inclined to do anything about it? It sounds too good to be true. So I checked, more in hope than expectation and, of course, it is too good to be true!

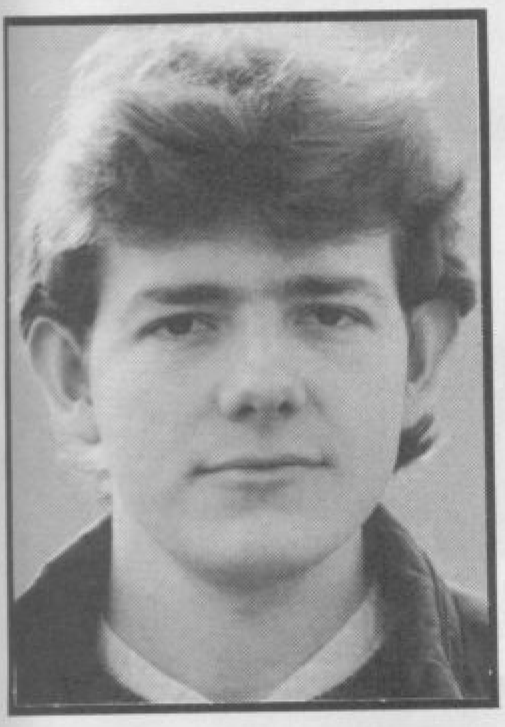
We must assume that Sinclair assigned the copyright in the Rom to Amstrad as part of the package

HEWSON HELPLINE

continuously brightening and darkening as the sweep of the beam downwards causing a burst of brightness is followed by the fading of the area just swept over.

Why, you may ask, do we not see the variation in brightness of the screen picture? Why are we not driven mad by its continuous brightening and darkening?

Why indeed? Some would argue that we are indeed driven mad by it but I would retort that if fewer people watched Terry Wogan on their TVs and spent the time playing with their Spectrums instead then less madness would



deal although we cannot be absolutely certain without sight of the relevant agreement. Not that it matters much because the changes you are suggesting are far too small to count as an original or independent piece of work and that apoparently is the criterion. So if you copy the Rom even after making some changes, Amstrad are fully entitled to come down on you like a ton of bricks. And I have to say that since I make my living by creating and selling original, copyright material I am all for individuals and organisations protecting their copyrights if the need arises. So there!

In a postscript to my remarks last month concerning the registration of programs for the purposes of copyright protection the Institution of Analysts and Programmers have written to me with more details of their service. It would appear that for a one-off fee of £12.50 together with an annual storage charge of £5.00 plus 30p per page of hard copy, the Institution will maintain a program on its Copyright Register. They also supply some handy advice on copyright practice in general.

occur. Such a debate, however, is not central to the ideas we are currently exploring.

The truth is that the human eye cannot respond to the rate of variation in intensity and what we see is a sort of average brightness with the peaks and troughs smoothed out. To prove this to yourself try photographing a TV screen using a camera with a variable shutter speed. You will have to experiment with various apertures to get the right exposure and it is best to take the photographs in a darkened room.

You will find that if you use a long exposure – say a thirtieth of a second or more – the brightening and darkening will be averaged out and the photograph of the TV picture will look perfectly ordinary. If however you use a short exposure – say about five hundreths of a second – you will catch the beam as it sweeps down the screen and freeze the action. If for example the beam is half way down the screen at the instant the photograph is taken then the upper half will be bright, particularly towards the bottom of the upper half in the area which the beam has just passed over. The lower part of the screen will be distinctly duller, particularly in the area which the beam is getting to next, because it will not have been written on for nearly a fiftieth of a second.

Of course the fifty times a second "frame rate" was not chosen by chance by the engineers who defined our national TV system. They chose it because they knew that the flicker which is inherent in the system occurs too quickly for the human eye to follow. If you drop the frame rate to twenty five times a second then the flicker is quite noticeable. And this is where our fun and games begins.

Getting back to the game that we are designing and the decision as to whether or not to use a "back screen". There are two disadvantages in using one. The first is that a full size duplicate screen gobbles up a hefty 6.75K of memory which is a large chunk out of the 41.25K available. Even if a reduced screen is used a nasty dollop of say 4K can disappear in this way.

The second disadvantage is that once the next screen image is ready your program has to waste time copying the contents of your 4 to 6.75K back screen to the display file and attributes area. depending on the number of bytes to be transferred and the efficiency of your code this can take 10 or so milliseconds ie about one hundredth of a second or about half the entire amount of time taken by the hardware to write the picutre on the TV display. Nasty, nasty, nasty!

The advantage of a back screen is that nobody watching the program can see what you are up to so that you don't have to worry about a "half finished" picture getting transmitted to the TV screen. Thus your software problems are reduced and it can be that the time you waste copying the back screen when it is finished is more than saved by the simplicity and therefore speed of your other code.

One item to be aware of when either copying your back screen or writing directly in the display file is the importance of timing your operations so that you are not caught half way through the job. You can imagine the electron beam sweeping through the display file in much the same way that it sweeps down the screen. If the beam catches up with you then you risk creating a "scissoring" effect on the TV display. If for example you have a cartoon character walking across the TV screen and the electron beam catches up with you then the top half of the character will get displaced to the left or right (depending on the direction of movement) relative to the bottom half.

It is rather like crossing a busy road where the cars pass at perfectly regular intervals. If you step out into the road when you feel like it without regard to the passing traffic you risk getting knocked down. However if you time your crossing so that you set off immediately after a car has passed you will always get across safely providing you walk quickly enough. Incidentally you would be surprised how many commercial games get "knocked down" in this fashion. See if you can spot them.

You may be interested to know that the Spectrum version of **Uridium** does not use a back screen for reasons both of speed and space. Everything is written directly on to the screen at a software cycle rate of seventeen times per second, ie one third of the rate of the electron beam. We chose to do this because the combination of scrolling a huge background area with sprites moving separately over the top of the main image would yield a paltry up-date rate of about five to eight times a second if a back screen was used.

The trick which the conversion author, Dominic Robinson, discovered was to structure the data which describes the features of the background ships in such a way that the data can be written using short and therefore fast code on to the Spectrum screen display file. In other words he tailored his data base to match the peculiarities of the layout of the display file. I'm not giving away any trade secrets if I tell you that he chewed long and hard on a large number of pencils before he



worked out the best way to do the job.

Finally, be wary of using the (DIB instruction, as suggested by Derrick Dixon) in his question, if speed rather than compactness of codr is important to you. If you move the entire display, all 6.75K of it, using this instruction then it is in effect executed 6.75K times and each time the microprocessor stops to work out whether this is the last time it needs to do it. It is a bit like a man who when shoveling sand off a lorry stops and looks up after each shovel full to see if he has finished yet. It is better by far to set a counter in the B register, follow it by lots of LDI instructions and then finish up with a DJNZ so that the test only occurs once every 8, 16, 32 or even 256 times depending on the value of the counter selected. Remember tests take time.

Derrick also wins himself a free copy of **Uridium** for this month's most interesting letter■

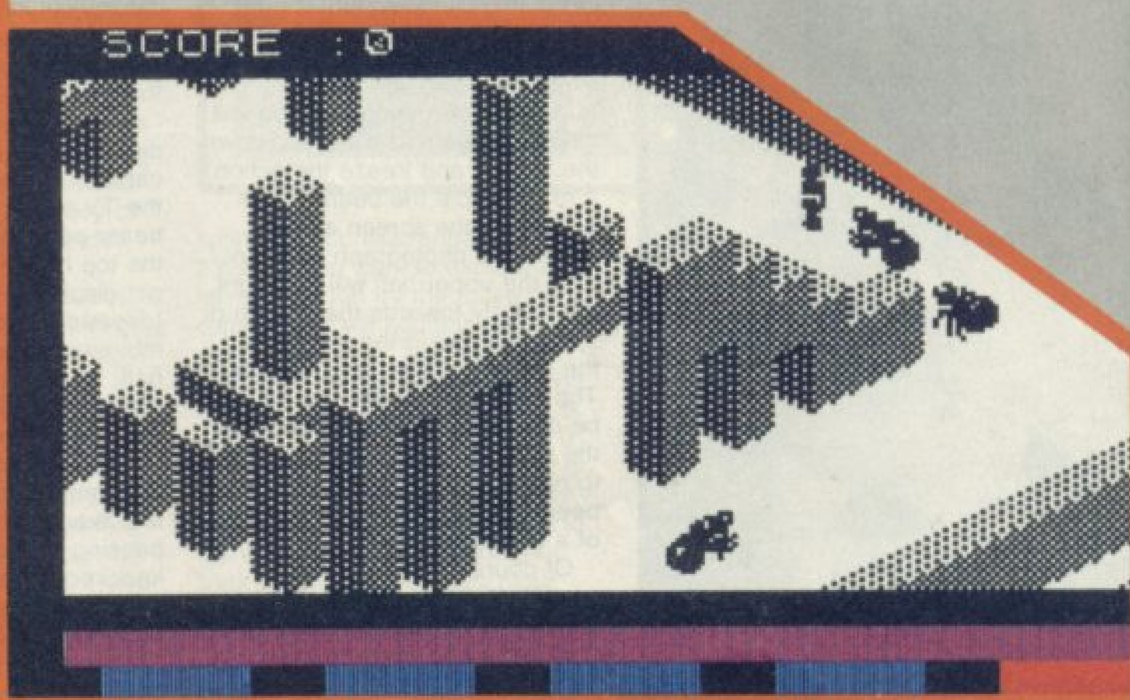
Employment campaign

Are there any spare jobs at *Sinclair User?* asks Duncan Macdonald of Dundee.

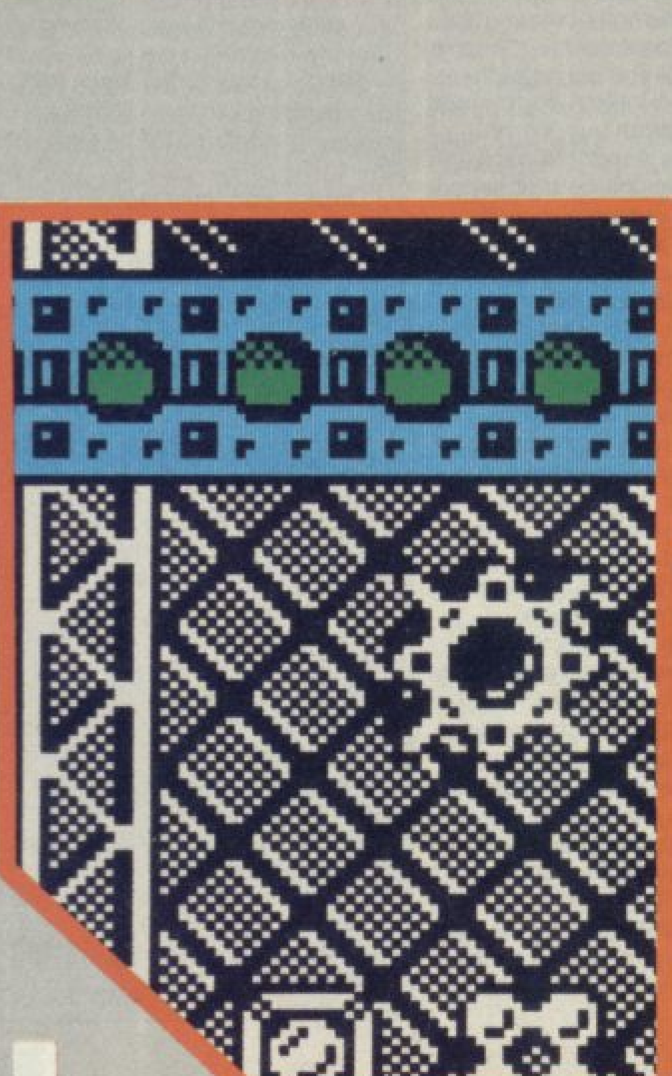
The truth is I don't know Duncan. I work out in the green fields of Oxfordshire not in the smokey gloom of Central London with the rest of the *Sinclair User* team. Mind you I would be wary of working with that lot if I were you Duncan. The editor has big teeth and pointy ears and he mutters dark Satanic runes as he hammers feverishly on his typewriter. Altogether most disturbing.


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OPERATIONAL


SCORE :0







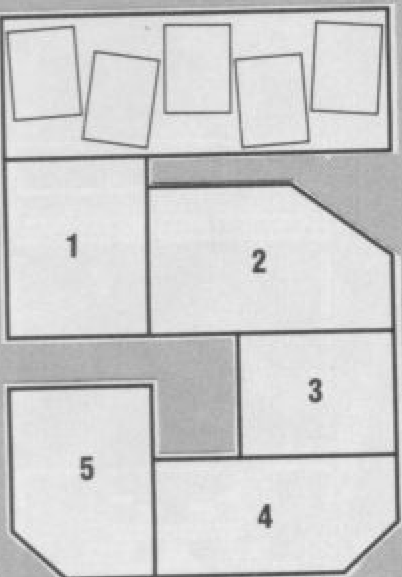
FIVE YEARS AT SINCLAIR USER!

Five years and SU is still here and going strong. We felt we had to do something to celebrate our longevity.

We thought about just doing a history of the magazine with a look at the various changes we've made to the mag. There was a problem with that idea though. It's very boring.

We thought of doing an intellectual analysis of the sociological significance of the magazine in relation to the industry as a whole. That was even more boring.

What isn't boring? Computer games. The one thing constant in an industry subject to myriad changes and constant technical developments: the simple joy of blowing away zillions of helpless alien beings. Thus we present A History of Software, related via the pages of SU as told by games through the ages!



1 **Time-Gate.** The dots are interstellar space, the two little lines are your lasers. Lasers have got better since then

2 Wonderfully surreal. **3D Ant Attack** was a nightmarish Escher fantasy — naff score screen though

3 **Manic Miner.** Could it ever have known what it'd be responsible for? Can we ever forgive it?

4 **Way of the Exploding Fist** featured smoothish animation of large figures. It also had a particularly tasteful kind of extreme violence.

5 **Shadow Skimmer** wins all the current awards for technical "Oh my God how did they do that"-ness. Large sprites, detailed backgrounds, smoooooth action. Compare it with **Time-Gate** . . . and be amazed

April 1982: Issue 1

SU begins – self-styled the 'independent magazine for the independent user'. The contents announces "Software Scene: Hopefully all new software which comes on to the market will come under our scrutiny and will form the basis of a series of snappy reviews". On page 7 we find the following snappyness "This game is in full 3D and presents you with an ever-changing view of a corridor along which you must travel to get out of the maze. . ." Hot stuff. The game is 3D Labyrinth. It cost £5.95 and ran in 14K on the ZX81. There was no picture (except a sketch of a maze) and the only colour in the magazine was a picture of Andrew Hewson. Oh well – the only way to go was forward. And of course we did.

October 1982: Issue 7

In between these issues the Spectrum was launched but the software reviews had lost none of their snappyness. We still didn't manage to get any pictures either. Issue 7 is marked by a review of Meteor Storm: 'the meteors are rushing thick and fast in the new Quicksilva version of Meteor Storm for the 16K Spectrum' Snap-eeee. Now Meteor Storm was a pretty reasonable hi-res (if two-colour) blast 'em up, and showed off, quite reasonably, what the Spectrum could do in 16K.

March 1983: Issue No 12

By this time some moderately hot titles had been launched. Quicksilva had – by then the No 1 software house – had SF style advertising and was selling games like Time-Gate "the unbelievable space/time adventure". It was pretty good really. Sort of 3Dish with space represented as swirling dots (not that bad actually). It had photon missiles and lasers and quite a lot to kill. Did SU manage a picture? Em, not as such.

October 1983: Issue No 19

This one had a Morris Dancer on the front (last month's *Gremlin* pic actually). The Microdrive had been launched and there was a two-page colour feature on the Entwistle family. It ends ". . together Entwistle and his son are learning more and more as they explore the seemingly limitless potential of the ZX81". Pics of games? Nah.

December 1983: Issue No 21

Stop Press. . . a picture of a game in SU. There is an interview with Sandy White, author of the very clever and very creepy 3D Ant Attack and in the picture you can almost see a bit of the game. There is also a review of Manic Miner: 'Manic Miner should keep anyone, child or adult, enthralled through the long winter evenings'. Imagine that.

April 1984: Issue No 25

Gasp, in *Software Scene* there are two colour screen pictures, one of The Snowman (an early licensing deal from Quicksilva) and another from Phipps Associates called Loony Zoo. Neither are particularly exciting and both were a bit blue looking.

August 1984: Issue No 29

Yee Ha! *Software Scene* turns completely into colour – pictures abound. Featured games include Sabre Wulf – Ultimate is looking good – in some ways graphics haven't improved all that much. John Gilbert thinks Ultimate's new price band of £9.95 is too much. Pretty soon everything costs this much.

February 1985: Issue No 35

Ultimate really does change the software world as Knight Lore is released to an unsuspecting populace. People fall over backwards. *Gremlin* appears and *User of the Month* seems to have disappeared forever. The magazine is showing the first signs of changing. But into what? In fact the entire industry is changing, games are slowly creeping up in importance.

December 1985: Issue 45

SU now has a software chart. This month Daley Thompson's Supertest is No 1 and Mastertronic has six hits charted. Things seem to be getting less serious, and there's a *Spitting Image* puppet of Sir CLive on the front cover. More and more pages of software reviews, less and less pages of hardware. even the Hit Squad is going wacky with an interview with dear 'ole Fergus of Delta 4.

March 1986: Issue 48

SU is becoming almost funky. Lots of software coverage, much of it in colour. Some software looks fabulous, some looks just like it always did. For example Ultimate's Gunfright looks no better than any of its previous games, perhaps worse. Zoids looks pretty clever, Rambo looks pretty naff. There is even a feature on how to play Tau Ceti. The days of the Entwistle family and their ZX81 with limitless potential are gone forever.

November 1986: Issue No 56

A new Logo. General wonderfulness all round, he said impartially. Gamewise Uridum gets a *Classic* and definitely does look better than the games of two years earlier. Firelord gets one but graphically isn't so very different to Sabrewulf, even the little man looks similar. Gauntlet looks new and different but isn't out yet. Dandy and Druid are and they look like Gauntlet so that's all right.

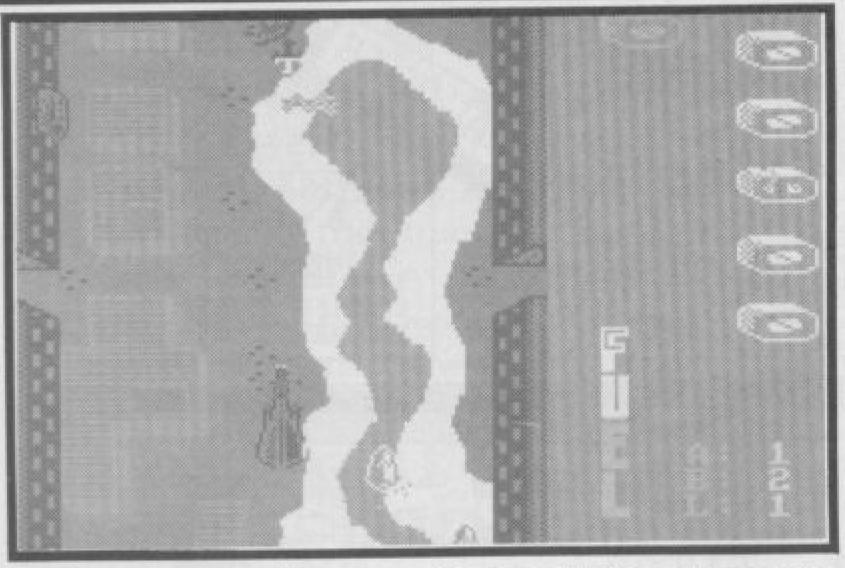
March 1987: Issue No 59

Colour, a free maps booklet and the first of a series of pull-out colour posters. The games? Well Nemesis gets a *Classic* and represents state of the art in the world of left to right scrolling kill everything. What's changed in five years? State of the art games have big smooth graphics, they didn't used to. Budget games now look like the full price games of a year ago – at least the best ones do. Sometimes people still release games which would have been called 'poor' in the snappy reviewers of SU version one. Macsen, for Eastenders, take a bow. . .


Screen after screen of the most addictive action and the most compulsive game-play.
ARKANOID
THE BLOCKBUSTER
Licensed from © Taito Corp. 1986.
Programmed for Amstrad, Spectrum,
Commodore, Atari by Imagine Software
TAITO
COIN-OP
Taito's current Arcade Hit
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Ask for ARKANOID
"The REAL thing"
at your local computer stockist.
Screen shots taken from Arcade version.
Imagine
...the name of the game
Imagine Software (1984) Limited
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ARCADE REVIEW

TRAP

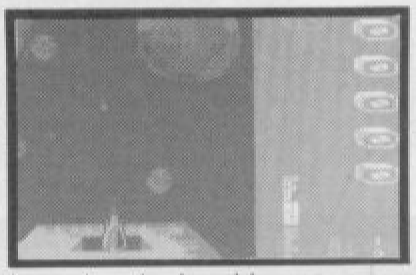


Have you noticed how games have been getting smaller recently? Whole chunks of screen disappear to be filled with scrolls or very very large score tables. The actual playing area, meanwhile, is up in the top left-hand corner. Probably some technical explanation. . .

I bring up the subject in the case of **Trap** because it too has a diminished screen and enormous scores. It reminds me in a general way of **Terra Cresta** and its ilk – not a rip-off but the same kind of up down scrolling, blast that, bomb this, avoid that, opus.

Level 1 is barely a level, as such, at all. You hurtle through space avoiding space mines before arriving at the planet proper. It's not too difficult and just gives you a chance to get going and gain the misleading impression that you're going to be good at the game.

Level 2 is the crux of the affair. A **Terra Cresta** –like battle across a scrolling landscape chock fill of missile launching alien crafts, defensive barrier thingys that zip back and forth, round things that kill you, cell-like things that kill you and so on. There are boats in rivers to be bombed lasers to be destroyed and smart bombs called Zammo(s). To complete the level you need to reach certain scores on aliens blasted,



boats bombed and lasers obliterated.

Then you go on to Level 3 which is where you walk about the planet surface collecting Orbs and dodging holes. Why? Read on.

One of the more twiddly aspects of the game is the way, using Orbs you have collected, you can, (at the beginning of each round) buy yourself a new spaceship.

The graphics are fair – standard design aliens but OK. Though the landscape scroll is a little jerky it does contain a fair amount of detail. Personally, I found the whole thing a bit garish.

FACTS BOX

Fairly good space dodge and kill game. It has all the extra trimmings but maybe doesn't add up to anything really stunning

TRAP
Label: Alligata
Author: Richard Stevensen and David Wright
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: Kempston

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★☆☆

One definite negative point in an undecided sort of review – the additional sound on the 128K version of the game is very odd indeed, like a chorus of deranged Mugwies ■

SKY RUNNER

FACTS BOX

Long awaited and marginally disappointing. Complicated plot attempts to disguise a simple 3D game

SKY RUNNER
Label: Cascade
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

Reviewer: Ray Stead

★★★★☆

Cascade's **ACE** was a No 1 title. Now here's the follow-up – **Sky Runner** – again written by Ian Martin.

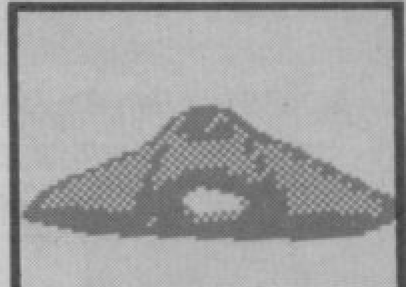
If ever there was an over-complicated plot for a computer game, **Sky Runner** has it. When you cut through all the waffle that monopolises the back of the cassette box and spills over into the instruction sheet, we find that this a game about drugs.

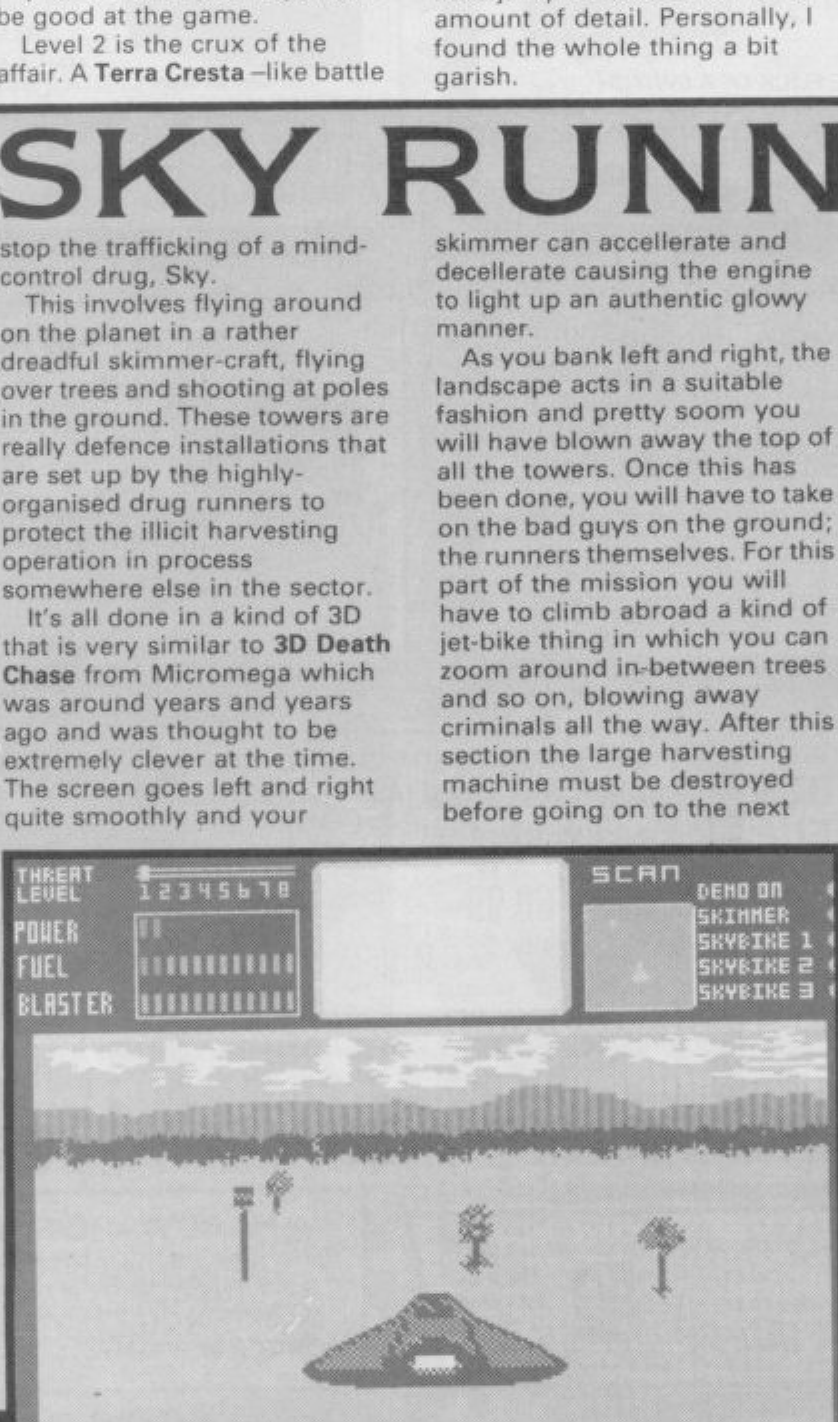
You are a freelance **Sky Runner** a space pilot with an interest in the moral fibre of the universe as well as his bank balance. You are hired by upstanding governments to stop the trafficking of a mind-control drug, Sky.

This involves flying around on the planet in a rather dreadful skimmer-craft, flying over trees and shooting at poles in the ground. These towers are really defence installations that are set up by the highly-organised drug runners to protect the illicit harvesting operation in process somewhere else in the sector.

It's all done in a kind of 3D that is very similar to **3D Death Chase** from Micromega which was around years and years ago and was thought to be extremely clever at the time. The screen goes left and right quite smoothly and your skimmer can accellerate and decellerate causing the engine to light up an authentic glowy manner.

As you bank left and right, the landscape acts in a suitable fashion and pretty soom you will have blown away the top of all the towers. Once this has been done, you will have to take on the bad guys on the ground; the runners themselves. For this part of the mission you will have to climb abroad a kind of jet-bike thing in which you can zoom around in-between trees and so on, blowing away criminals all the way. After this section the large harvesting machine must be destroyed before going on to the next





level.

At the start of the game you can select the Threat level which affects quite how many aliens there are and how crazy they are. This is obviously handy for beginners as it allows a kind of practice mode to be explored while dealing with weedy aliens.

The main problem with **Sky Runner** is that although it's pleasant enough to play, you don't really feel that much is resting on your success. There's no feeling of urgency as you play. Even if you attempt to go really fast, all that happens is you end up crashing into a tree. OK so that's pretty bad. . .

Sky Runner is pretty offensive and quite a pleasant play. It doesn't hold any mysteries or genuine excitement, though, apart from the truly abysmal colour coded anti-piracy device that you have to use before getting into the game ■

CLONE WARS!



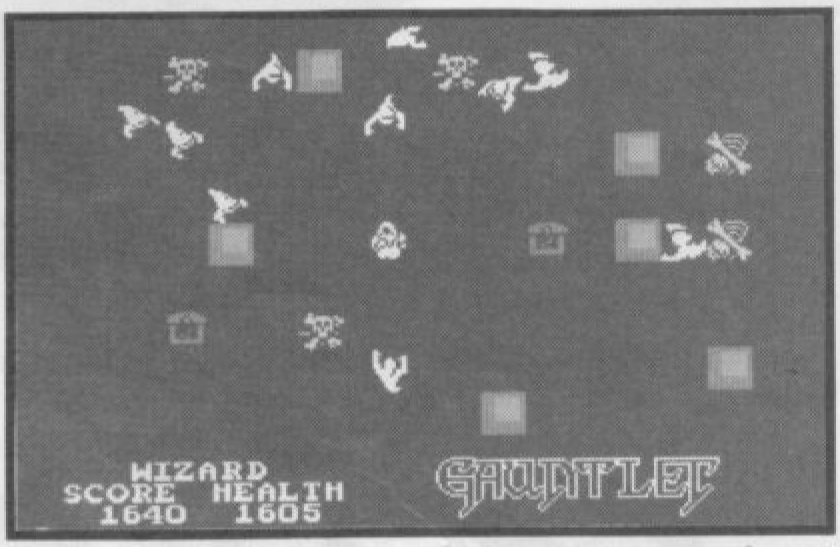
Gauntlet clones are still springing up on every corner. But they're all slightly different. Each has twists, flaws and tweaks that may infuriate or delight you. It's all very confusing. Which is THE one to get? To set the record straight, SU gives the low-down on the clones.

THE ORIGINAL GAUNTLET COIN-OP

What made **Gauntlet** the success it was? The graphics were only fair – certainly no more than average – sound (apart from the speech at the beginning) was just OKish and it all came down to zooming around and pressing the *Fire* button a lot.

However, **Gauntlet** was a new kind of game. It took ideas based on *Dungeons and Dragons* – mazes, treasure, monsters, strength and spell fire power and made them what has been a game that lasted hours or even days, digestible in bite sized, all-action chunks. **Gauntlet's** vast number of levels and the way you 'bought' extra time with more money gave it an appeal that was a mixture of fantasy and fruit machine.

Gauntlet had another feature previously unheard of in big league coin-ops – a two player version where you tried to help one another and beat the machine rather than each other. It generated a lot of gung-ho 'go for it' American-style team spirit and made you feel good. It's fast, very violent and easy to understand, the best recipe there is for a classic arcade game.



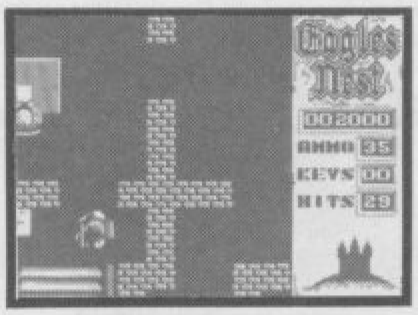
GAUNTLET

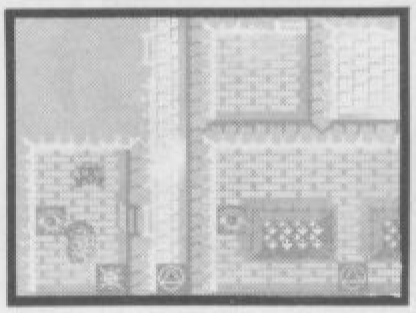
Label: US Gold; Price: £9.95; Rating: ★★★★★

The official version. Set in the mystical times of elves and magicians. Few frills. As straight-down-the-line as possible.
Important points:
- **Very authentic gameplay and graphics**
- **Time consuming multi-loading of levels**
- **Works best as two-player game**
- **Game strategies for arcade version can be used effectively**
- **Fairly basic graphics**
- **Selection of characters. Some tough, others smart etc**

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST

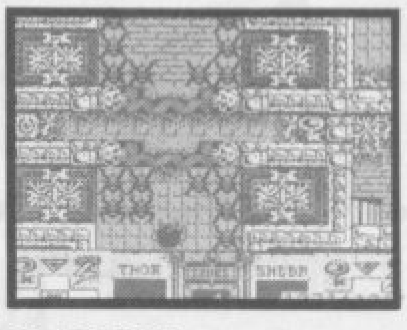
Label: Pandora Software; Price: £8.95; Star rating: Classic
World War II scenario. The plot to infiltrate a German castle and release your comrade saboteurs. Spells replaced by bullets. Strategic elements.
Important points:
- **Large graphics**
- **Moderate storyline**
- **Limit of 99 shots before ammo runs out**
- **First aid kits replenish stamina**
- **Good 48K/128K music/sound options**





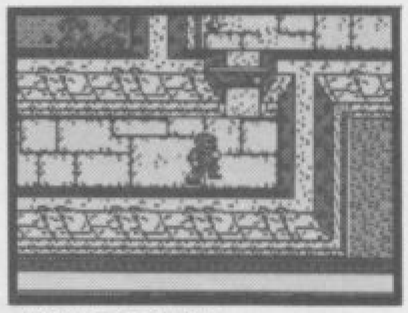
RANARAMA

Label: Hewson; Prices: £7.95; Star rating: Classic
More subtle than Gauntlet. Again the plot is mythological fantasy, but extra bits and pieces make Ranarama stand on its own, even without the big name link
Important points:
- **Highly colourful graphics**
- **Innovative plot**
- **Sub-game involving concocting spells**
- **Map routine included**
- **Fights sometimes can be wisely avoided**
- **Lots of thought required**



DANDY

Label: Electric Dreams; Price: £7.99; Star Rating: Classic
Simple swords and sorcery plot. Kill everthing in sight while collecting extra spells and keys and treasure. Busy screens.
Important points:
- **Complex, colourful graphics**
- **Two-player team option**
- **Little variation in graphics from level to level**
- **Choice of characters**
- **Fast and destructive gameplay**

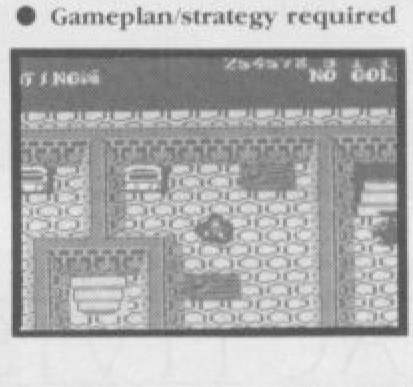


AVENGER

Label: Gremlin Graphics; Price: £9.95; Star Rating: Classic
A distant Gauntlet relative. Martial-arts sequel to Way of the Tiger. More sophisticated and innovative than the arcade game
Important points:
- **300 scrolling screens**
- **Complicated maze**
- **Very large, detailed graphics**
- **Less killing than the original**
- **Numerous traps to hinder progress**
- **Considerable thought required**

DRUID

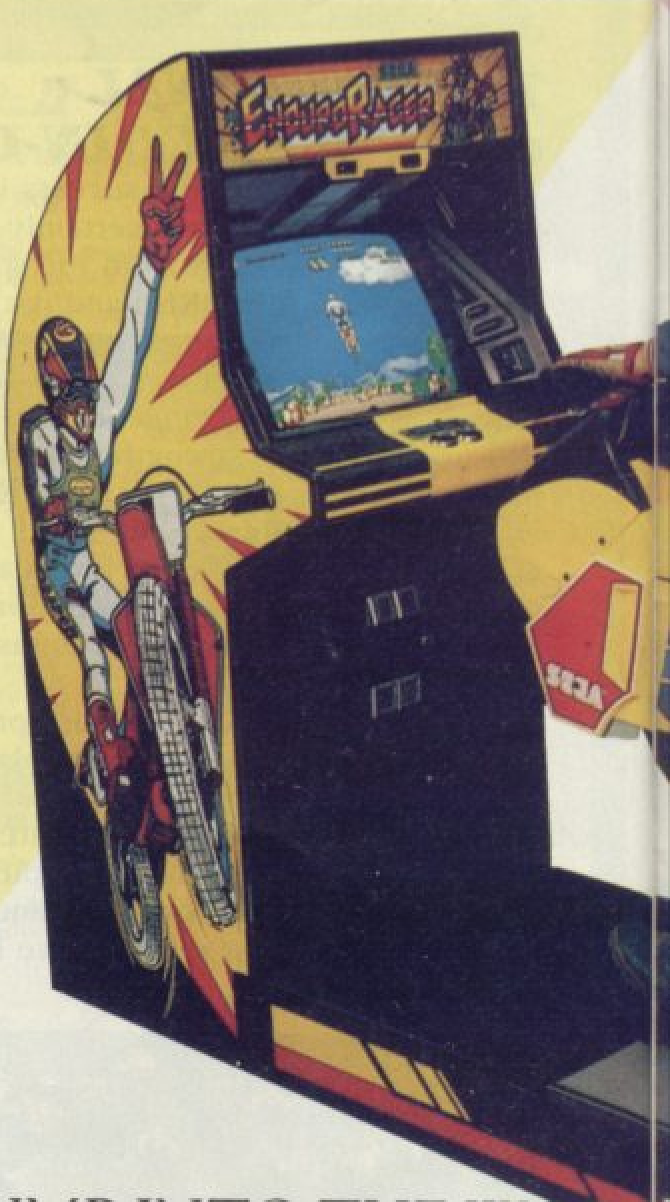
Label: Firebird; Price: £7.95; Star rating: ★★★★★
Unlike Gauntlet in many ways, but akin in many others. Varied graphics and spells combined with fast gameplay account for its appeal.
Important points:
- **Not a straight conversion**
- **Numerous levels, each with varied graphics**
- **Choice of spells**
- **Golem the bodyguard to assist you**
- **Different spells for different foes**
- **Gameplan/strategy required**



Arcades witho

Licensed to deliver big brothers act

SE



WONDER BOY

'Wonderboy reminds me of Super Mario Brothers... you can't go wrong with Wonderboy, it requires skill, timing and is good, clean fun.'

'Dressed to kill in nappies and a motorbike helmet, with a skateboard as his trusty steed and wielding a stone axe, Wonderboy is born – ready to fight off the nastiest of nasties, willing to leap the widest chasm, and eager to risk his life'. Arcade Action, Computer and Video Games



ARCADE SCREEN





ARCADE SCREEN

- 'Best and fastest scrolling on a racing game'
- 'Best sprite design'
- 'Best playability'
- 'Best coin-op conversion' Popular Computing Weekly
- '...brilliant' Arcade Action, Computer and Video Games
- Your Sinclair Megagame

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'...extremely addictive and highly playable' — Arcade Action, Computer and Video Games



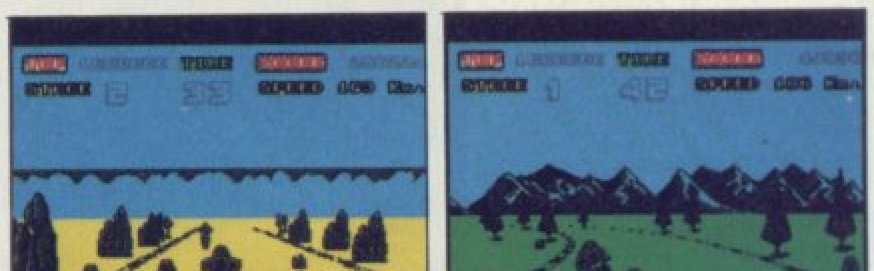
ARCADE SCREENS



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Sinclair User Magazine

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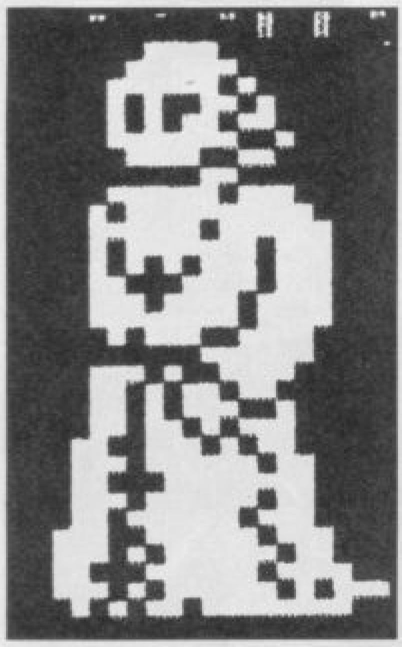
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BUDGET £1·99 £2·99 REVIEW

FEUD

I never was much good at gardening. I don't know, put me in a plot of plants, and I couldn't tell a geranium from a gerbil.

I suppose if you haven't got green fingers, you haven't got green fingers. Now supposed you're a wizard, and that wizardry is the way you make your living. To be any good at it, you need to have an odd spell or two in your book (after all what good is a wiz with no spells, its like playing a guitar with no strings!)



Most spells can be made by mixing certain herbs together in your special magic cauldron (you keep abreast of the latest recipe by watching Grey Beards TV show, a sort of magic users Delia Smith) but the problem is finding the blessed things. Herbs just cannot be grown by any old bod, you need skill. So to be a good wizard, you have to be a good gardener.

Unfortunately, in **Feud** you're not. There is this rival wizard who fancies himself as the local main man, and is naturally out to get you. What you have to do is run around the locale, visiting other people's gardens, and pinching their herbs. When you have collected a good bunch, you need too rush back to your cauldron, and mix them to make the spells that will do it to him before he does it to you.

The graphics really are very pretty, with a mixture of terrain from woodland to huts to rivers to mazes, and believe me you don't get long before old Leanoric comes after you.

Apart from the two main wizard characters there are a number of villagers roaming around disguised as Dick Whittingtons, and Farmer Giles. These pobr souls can be turned into zombies by zapping them with the right spell, and they can then chase after old Leanoric on your behalf.

A very simple game, yet addictive, and tricky to complete, with great graphics and happily no colour clash.

But what, I hear you ask, is the point of it all. Well two points, really. One is that you get to be main man/wiz in the kingdom, and the other is it gives you a crash course on becoming a better gardener■

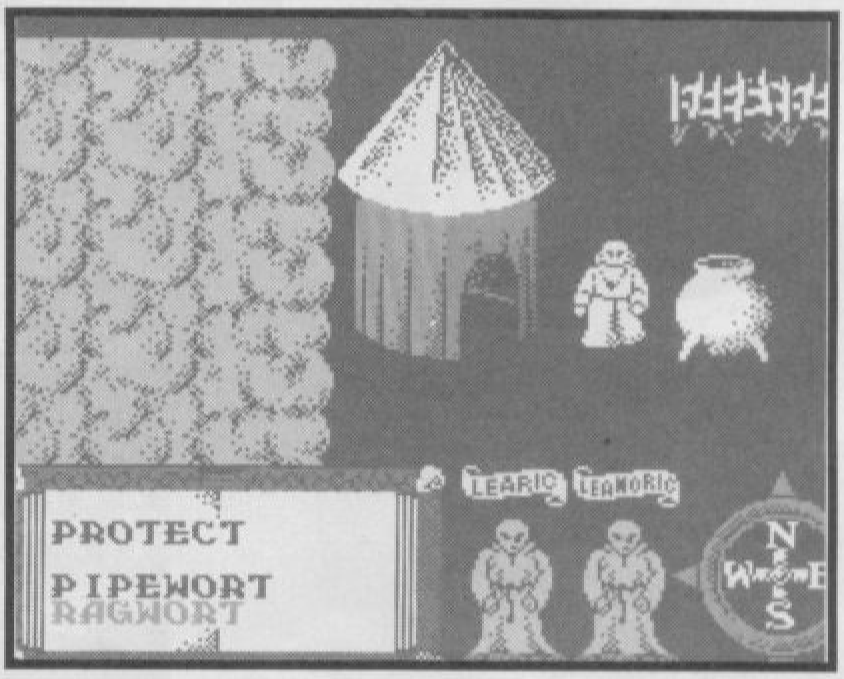
FACTS BOX

A highly entertaining tussle between two wizards with great graphics and 12 spells to conjure with

FEUD
Label: Mastertronic
Price: £2.99
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Andy Moss

★★★★☆



DEATHWAKE

Hindsight is always a useful barometer of how a piece of software, once thought of as beyond the realms of possibility on a home computer, has traversed the test of time.

Does it still stand out as a technical achievement, or does it seem somewhat, well laclustre.

I remember Deathwake being released around two years ago on the Quicksiva label, and having also reviewed it then I feel that this is a good opportunity to compare notes.

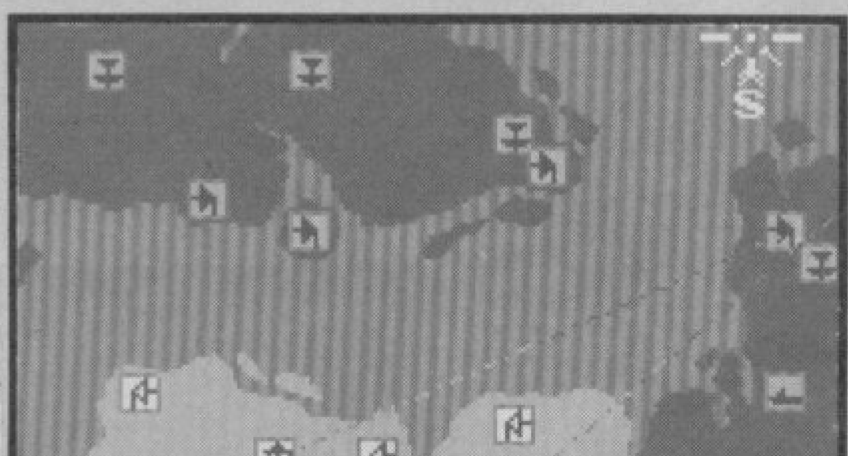
The actual game senario first. This entails you as protector and captain of the destroyer undaunted, to guide her to the enemy stronghold at the end of an inlet, whilst dodging torpedoes and flack from opposing planes and ships. There is also a strategy element in the game, that lets you plot an air strike on to some of the enemy bases, before each round of action to temporarily disable them. (This not only increases your chances of survival but also brings a certain reality to the gameplay.)

As each round begins you are faced with a varied selection of hostile hardware, such as torpedo planes, bombers, gun boats and minefields, and as soon as your Undaunted takes 100% damage it's all over.

So, how does it compare two years on?

Well I wasn't very enamoured with the game the first time round. The sound was feeble, and the graphics pretty scarce. I suppose it was a so-so game then. Now it reminds me of what budget games used to be like you know, the you – paid-nearly-zilch-what-do-you-expect-type of game.

However Mastertronic has proved that cheap is not nasty and this can't compete. Sadly in this case Deathwake is cheap and nasty■



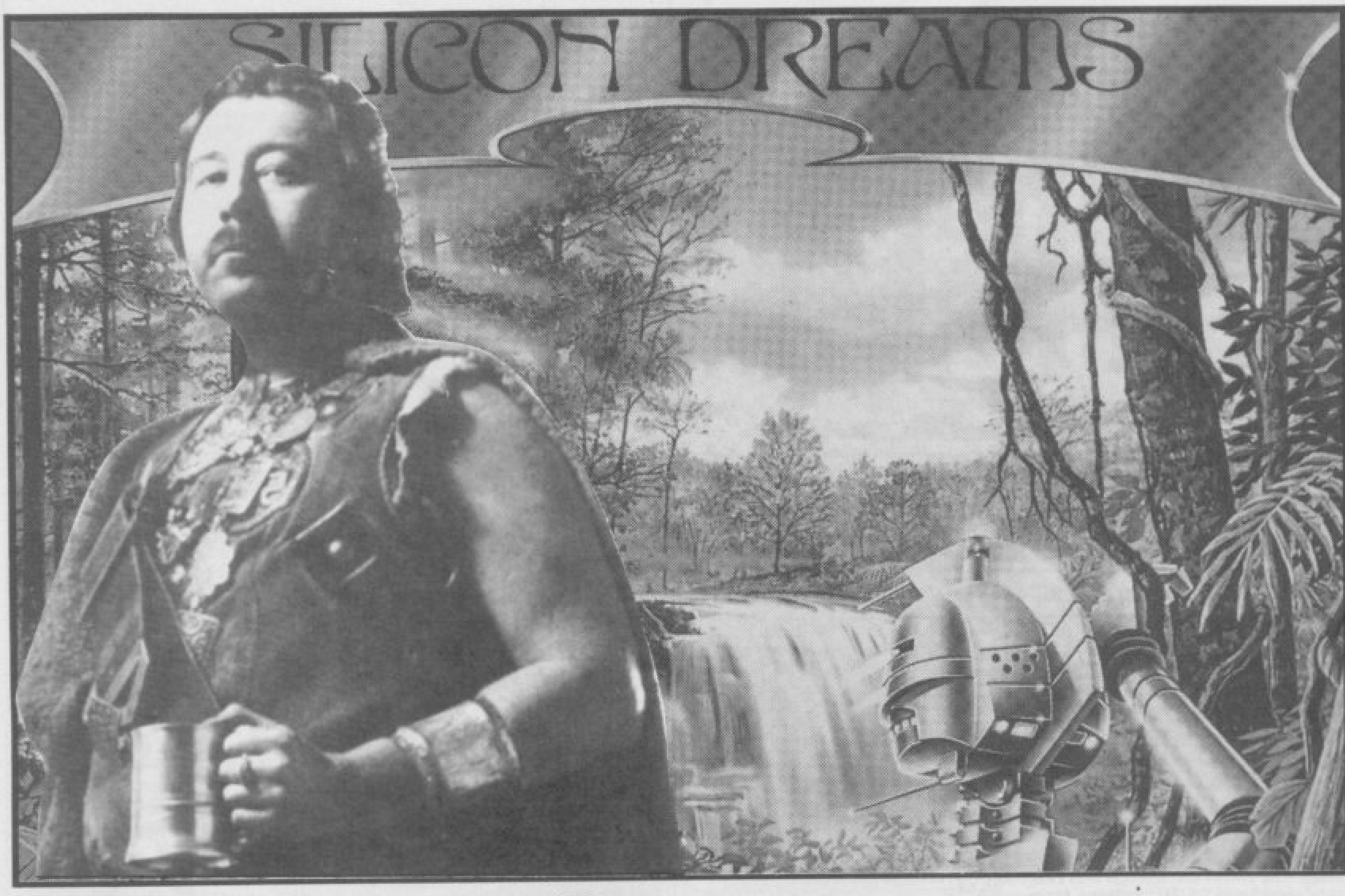
FACTS BOX

Tired old re-release of a now dated game. You'd be better off getting Beach Head. Very dull. Doesn't age well

DEATHWAKE
Label: Bug-Byte
Price: £1.99
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Andy Moss

★★☆☆☆



GORDO'S HELPLINE

Let's start with the bad news.

With great regret and insane rage I have to inform you all that the scroll-bag didn't get through this month. As usual, I'd strapped on my snowshoes and furry boots and zipped down to the local posting-station to collect the monthly delivery. As usual I queued for hours whilst sturdy mountain-men picked up packages of socks from their mothers or free toast-racks from catalogue firms. At last I faced the surly post-troll who runs the place.

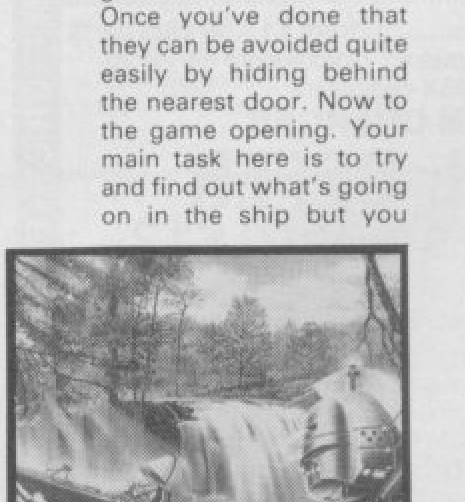
"Sorry, squire," he grunted, "Can't find your bag anywhere – it came in but we. . . we,er,we've lost it." Polite questioning soon gave way to frosty demands and vicious complaints. All to no avail.

So, my little ones, if you wrote to me between Christmas and early February, try again eh? Me, I'm polishing my best custom-built, nail-studded club ready for the next interview I have with 'Customer Services' next week. A spot of sick-leave may encourage them to look a little harder. Still, the show must go on so let's start up with the newly resurrected

Silicon Dreams Trilogy

from Level 9, slick sci-fi adventures set in a robot-infested future. The first game, **Snowball,** puts you aboard a vast colony spaceship winging its way to Eden, the target planet. Simple this spaceship is not, as Mick Tingay of Wimbledon well knows: "I can get myself out of the hibernation coffin at the beginning without too much hassle but I get into a complete mess afterwards, usually being captured by the Nightingales. How do I survive the opening sequence of the game?"

First let's look at the Nightingales. These are lethally security-conscious nursemaid robots which will actually come looking for you on the start level – blue mortuaries, white level. That means your first task is to get off the start level. Once you've done that they can be avoided quite easily by hiding behind the nearest door. Now to the game opening. Your main task here is to try and find out what's going on in the ship but you also need a bracelet.



You wake in your 'coffin'. . . There's a lever here – pull it and get out. Your own coffin will slide away when you climb out and, to get into the mortuary above, you'll need something to stand on. Go north, push three buttons in turn to slide out another coffin. Go back south and up onto the coffin. Now up again into the next mortuary – away from the very thorough start-level Nightingales.

Your first problem on the new level is another of these robots, so go north and wait until it's disappeared, then open the door and into the passageway. East from here is the lift – press a button to call it and get in. Go down to where you can 3,8 and go up repeatedly until you get to the winch room. 15,8 and 3,14. You can open the trapdoor with this and go up. Keep your equipment tidily with you and go south to the airlock and through – the button sequence here you can work out for yourself. From here to the computer is not so difficult but to operate it you must wear the visor and 12,1. You must blink to choose a number. Nearby you should find the bracelet. You're on your own now. . .



GORDO'S HELPLINE

THE QUICKIES



VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE: Tim Squires of Colchester used two naughty words: "How do I get across the chasm in Part One where T*ny Br*idge appears? (*Fetch me the smelling salts! G.G.*) He arrives if you wave the rod – the usual way to make the bridge in the real Colossal."

V.B.C.A. is quite different here; you don't need magic, just the log from the wellie house. You won't be able to carry it at the beginning but if you drop your gear in the Debris Room and 6,11, you'll be transported back. Get the log and repeat the magic word. At the chasm you need only 13,4 to go west.

BOGGIT: Tony Daniels is close to success in Part Three: "I've given Lard the small, curious key and gone to Daug's hall. Problem is I can't kill him with the bow – what am I doing wrong?" After you've got the bow, go to Ravenhill where a little bird will tell you the correct place to shoot your missile. Simply 9,5 – dragon or Daug won't do.

THE HOBBIT: Yes, folks, it's back again – though not for long one assumes, now that Melbourne House have sold out. A new generation gets stuck in the Goblin's Dungeon – but not this month. David Jones of Mold begs: "How do I cross the Black River? I can't find a boat to get me across and it's useless swimming." Too right, Dave. Looking around helps in almost every adventure, so first Look Across River. You'll see the boat. Now 7,2,10 until it lands in the boat – keep trying if you don't do it straight away. When it lands 16,2 to get the boat across to your side, climb into it and climb out the other side. Voila.

TOWER OF DESPAIR Straight forward this one from Richard Sweeney of Lothian: "How do I persuade or force the ogre to leave the magical field at Ellwood's house?" First distract his attention by a wee bribe – 13,19. Then you can flamebolt the creature. 20,17 when it's safely snuffed to discover a useful musical instrument which you'll need at the Tower.

ADVENTURELAND: Toby Flight of Rickmansworth writes, "Dear Keith," – surely some mistake? – "How do I get rid of the bees and how do I get out of the maze?" First the bees, which you don't actually want to get rid of as they'll prove useful later – drop the mirror for a tip on this. To capture the bees find a 25,21 and use the 24 to protect yourself against the stings. The maze has seven locations, the route being N, W, W, S, D. There are two treasures inside it and at the last location you'll also find a sign telling you how to leave. Say the word twice.

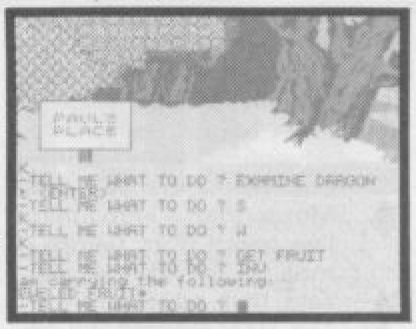
SEABASE DELTA: "I've made a see-saw from the barrel and plank and have the cannonball," says David Edwards of Taunton. "I know you can throw the ball in the air and get flipped up if standing on the plank – but how do I get on the thing in the first place?" Easy-peasy, shipmate. Carrying the ball you must 23,26 and then drop the ball. Ed Sharpe alias Christopher, not being so fortunate, can't get the ball out of the cannon. To do this you need the wooden plank from the wreck. Go down to the hold from there and simply lever the cannon to roll the ball free. I'm still getting queries about

System 15000

is the only game on the Spectrum which comes near to simulating the bizarre world of the hacker. Although it's been around a while I still get the odd plea like this from Mark Chapman alias Modo:

"Hi Greatbelly – just a little note for some relief in System 15000. Back issues of SU say to write Selcra on the noticeboard but I still can't get a message out of it. Also can't access Midminster Bank accounts. Without this the game can get a bit of a pain so gissa clue. Hysterically, Modo."

Basically this game is about tracking down phone numbers and codes by your own ingenuity and persistence. So for those



whose ingenuity or energy is stretched to breaking point, here's the full deal from Ian Thompson of Fish Hoek, S.A. – read at your own risk!

"**System 15000** is a tough one to crack so for those who are about to give up here are all the codes and number needed to complete it: Midminster Bank, 299-7629: Code 4M5. Routledge, 930-7269: Code CCYRP455. Seastar Travel, 353-2104. System Network, 746-4400. Cilisy Data, 363-4017: Code 673281. Perry, 493-5429. Dataline 723-9293: Code 6729. Polytechnic, 672-3427: Code CL332. Elwood, 010-1 (212) 976-6868: Code EBV 1657. Big Apple, 010-1 (212) 976-5858: Code PIP537. Craig, 837-1099. Satatel, 222-2196. Vinchetta, 952-7001 – be very careful here, security is tight! R.Boon, 348-1405: Code 7Y4Y.

Finally for all those who want to all pain. Reserve Manhattan Bank is on 010-1 (212) 976-5757 and the first entry code is M8R – the rest you should work out from your wanderings." Ian has actually left out a few minor things – Selcra Secs can be accessed on 800-4310: Code ARCLES. The screen here tells you how to use the Selcra system. At Kingsdown Poly the ordinary code is SL312

A couple of months ago I was sent a longish letter, all in Spanish, from Yivgen-Dhurian, Tobor, Noron and Ivian. These characters had carefully worked out the route through Moria in

Even with all these numbers you'll still need to play the game through to get the final crucial information to transfer the ripped-off cash back to Comdata. Ian supplied them but I'm just too mean to put them in.





GORDO'S HELPLINE

Lord of the Rings

including a useful sequence on how to rub out the large numbers of nasty orcs found thereabouts. I've done my best to translate and shorten some of it so try it out and see what happens. Here we go.

"Beside Moria's west gate there is the outline of a door. Examine the outline and wait until an inscription appears. When it does, Say Door 'Friend'. If the monster appears from the lake input Kill Tentacle with Sword and go through the door.

Moria is in four main sections. Heading from west to east the first is a maze with passages and rooms, the second is made up of two big halls and a guard room joined by passages. The third section is another labyrinth like the first. Finally there's the grand cavern zone where orcs and other horrors hang out, separated into three by a fissure and chasm crossed by the bridge of Khazard-dum. There's also a minor fifth area that joins the east gate to the bridge.

"Once into the first zone, drop a match, light match and light the candle with the match. Head into the rooms by going Up, Ex3, D, U, D, S, D. Now you should find an animal head, push this to open the slab door that's blocking your way. If you like you can do a Rambo and break slab with sword as an alternative.

Go east twice, N, S, E and U. This should bring you to the Hall of Mazarbul. Through it go S, S, W and examine the statue of Durin. The orc horde is in this area. The way to defeat them is first of all to tell Boromir, who's practically indestructible, to 'E.Kill horde with long sword.' Repeat this instruction three times then get him to drop the sword.

Now get each other character in turn to give his weapon to Boromir and, three times, tell him to 'E.Kill horde with (name or type of weapon)'. After each triple attack get Boromir to eat twice to restore his fighting power. Before he eats tell him to return the current weapon to its owner. When he's fed, the next character gives his weapon and on it goes until the horde is wiped out. The later warband can be dealt with by telling Frodo to Kill Warband with Sword."

The Ket Trilogy,

and, at last, some evidence that there are a few tenacious readers who actually plough through the back issues for adventure help. Someone calling himself only Murderman – who I think I've heard from before – moans: "In Issue 42 you said that adventurers in **The Final Mission,** on encountering a splatting noise in the high ceilinged room, should head west and up to the cubby hole. There they should wait six times, hear a splintering and find a closed door has been opened. When I did this I heard nothing, and, when I came down it was only to find the slime monster lying in wait – though this can be killed by dropping the soap from the cubby hole. Which door do you mean and is the soap really for the slime monster as it reappears and kills you?"

The soap does dispose of the slime monster if you throw it after the six waits. My sources make no mention of the damn thing reappearing and I suggest you don't hang about waiting for it in this area. You must retrace your steps back to the oak door with the gap – this is the splintering door referred to. The next door to the south can be opened with your key. Drop the key and go south.

You now run into another mad monk. Unless you win the fight at first attempt you must take the escape option and go quickly south to the endgame OK?

Right, bye for now, I'm off to the post office to achieve some compulsory redundancies.

GORDO GREATBELLY,
Landlord
The Dancing Ogre

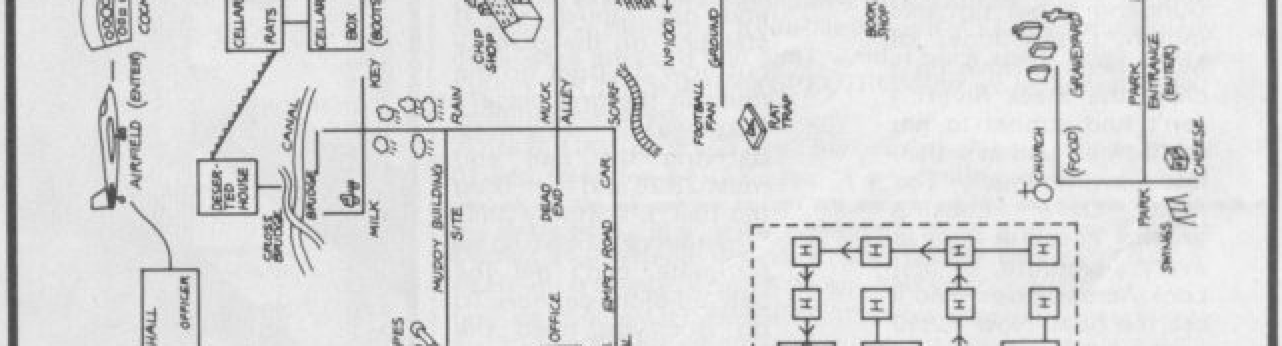
GREATBELLY'S THINGY

1: SCREEN
2: ROPE
3: TAKE
4: LOG
5: TAIL
6: SAY
7: THROW
8: TOOLBOX
9: SHOOT
10: ACROSS RIVER
11: COMMODORE
12: LOOK AT
13: DROP
14: SPANNER
15: OPEN
16: PULL
17: OGRE
18: CATERPILLAR
19: JADE
20: SEARCH
21: BOTTLE
22: SQUEEZE
23: WALK
24: MUD
25: EMPTY
26: PLANK

Urban Upstart Solution

Take Dungarees/Open Fridge/(Don't drink lager) Take Scissors/Use with tape to get into town hall and use to get boots by 'open box with scissors'/Take Key/To get out of the house/Take Book (in bookshop)/Read flying instructions/Take Hat/Take Tape/Use to get into the town hall/Take Trap/You land in hospital/Tak Coat/Wear to escape hospital/Take Herring (fish shop)/Take Papers/You'll need these at the airport/Take Food/"Eat" to open door of deserted house/Take cheese/Put cheese in trap for rats/ Take Letter/Found by examining dustbins/Open Letter/Open letter = blank card/Read letter = Dial 77722/Take Umbrella/Use to keep yourself dry/Insert Card/£5 is fiver/Take Scarf/Take Key/Insert when in cockpit/Take Milk/Drink/Take Box/Open Box with Scissors/Boots to cross muddy site/ Take Suit/Found by swimming pipes/

Also – When in Jail, wait until the phone rings/'Give papers to official' in departure hall/'Give fiver to official' also in departure hall/When in cockpit insert key on 'Take Off'



ADVENTURE REVIEW



GRANGE HILL

Grange Hill. How I used to love it! Dear ole Basser, Wodger, Codger, Bosser, Dodger and all the rest of the gang.

The real life! The teenage problems!! The romance!!! The computer game?

Now that, you have to admit, is a pretty odd licencing deal – even by the BBC's standards.

Quicksilva has got the deal and has produced the game.

And it's pretty odd. It's a mixture of adventure game text input, animated graphic action and menu and window option selections.

You play out an exciting plot in which you have to retrieve a Walkman from the locked school. It features a strong socially responsible line on teenage subjects (well drugs anyway). At an early part of the game you have to say 'no' to a drugs pusher (a man in a peculiar overcoat – always a strong sign).

Parts of the game are essentially arcade game tests – jumping over things, climbing down ladders and the like. In other ways the game is played like, say, **Spellbound** where you see an object, choose to pick it up using a menu system, select *Examine* to find out what it is and select *Use* if you want to use it – using the right object at the right time is obviously the test.

You are Gonch (for Gonch read Bilbo Baggins) and Holo, your school chum, is Thorin. And he acts like Thorin who, you may remember, frequently slowed up the action in **The Hobbit** by sitting down and signing about Gold.

Hollo just gets fed up and won't move until you plead with him. The pleading can take a while since frequently Holo says things like 'right' to your pleadings and then proceeds to ignore you.

Oh, and there's a time limit – you have to get the Walkman back before midnight – the current time is shown in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen.

There are some curious anomalies in the game. One instantaneous ending is when you trip over a paving stone on the third screen. Not only is it a bit much that such a thing ends the game, it seems that Hollo can just walk over it (you have to perform a curiously straight legged leap).

As you play the game some good points emerge. The various kinds of action – typed instructions, menu selection and graphic action – interact very well and, at its best, **Grange Hill** is one of the best attempts at taking text adventure style puzzles and turning them into real actions.

The graphics are, well, OKish in a simple sort of way. Some of the backgrounds are pretty simple but they are functional enough I guess. The central animated characters of Gonch and Hollo are better than stick insects – quite like the schoolboys in **Skool Daze** only bigger.

But you'd better be into the puzzles aspects of the game if you're really going to get a lot out it.

The end result is pretty difficult to summarise. Imagine a mixture of **Spellbound, The Hobbit** and **Skool Daze** and you've got some idea.

Certainly **Grange Hill** is nothing like a dodo. I think if you like **Spellbound** style games or you're really into the characters of **Grange Hill** (anybody?) you'll like this I guess.

I felt a bit undecided. In some ways – for example the interaction of the different command systems and the windowing – the game is very clever and sophisticated. In others – some of the graphics – it looks a bit cheap and shoddy. Look before you buy anyway ■

FACTS BOX

A curious mixture of adventure and aracade game. Some good puzzles should give it some appeal

GRANGE HILL
Label: Argus
Author: assorted
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joysticks: various

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★☆





FROM CLIVE SINCLAIR...THE NO-COMPROMISE

Z88 COMPUTER

IT MEASURES LESS THAN AN A4 PAD. IT WEIGHS LESS THAN 2 lb. IT COSTS JUST

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE

£199.95 +VAT, p&p

- RAM expandable to 3 Mbytes...
- Word-processing and spreadsheet built in, plus time- and data-management systems...
- Revolutionary supertwist LCD display...
- Completely self-contained – yet talks and listens to your IBM...

There has never been a computer like the Z88.

It's an extraordinarily powerful machine which offers word-processing, spreadsheet, and a set of time- and data-management tools in a single, highly portable package.

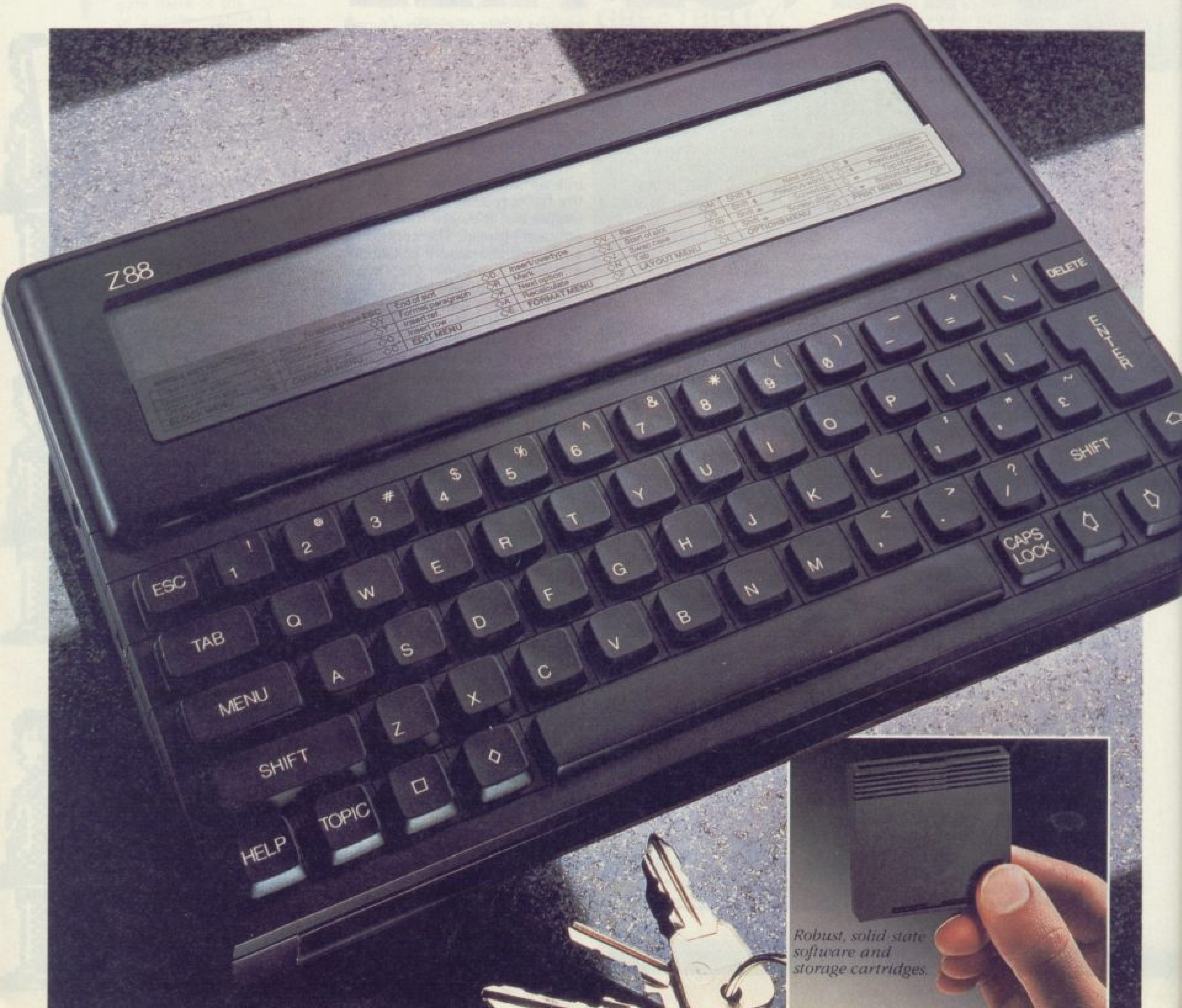
At £199.95, the Z88 is supplied with 32K resident RAM. Extra 32K costs under £20 – extra 128K under £50!

And heavy users will be able to expand the RAM to an astonishing 3 Mbytes, using plug-in RAM cartridges.

For printing text or data, the Z88 connects directly to most popular RS232-compatible printers, while for permanent storage the Z88 employs removable solid-state EPROM cartridges – no tape to break, no delicate disc to damage.

Though the Z88 is a powerful, full-facility, self-contained computer, it also acts as an extension of an office micro, connecting directly to allow exchange of text or data.

For every personal computer user, the Z88 offers a comprehensive specification in a package of unparalleled portability.



Robust, solid-state software and storage cartridges.

THE FACILITIES OF THE Z88

RAM Resident 32K, around 15K available (enough for around 2,000 words). Extra RAM available in 32K or 128K cartridges, up to three of which can be plugged into the Z88 to give a total of 416K (enough for a 200-page novel). 1 Mbyte cartridges available shortly. A built-in capacitor or the mains adapter preserves data in RAM while batteries are changed.

Permanent storage Where other machines rely on cassette recorders or disc drives, the Z88 uses solid-state EPROM – Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory – cartridges, with very rapid electronic access and absolute reliability. Up to three EPROM cartridges can be plugged in: 32K and 128K cartridges and ultra-violet eraser are available now. 1 Mbyte cartridges available shortly.

RS232-compatible port offers:

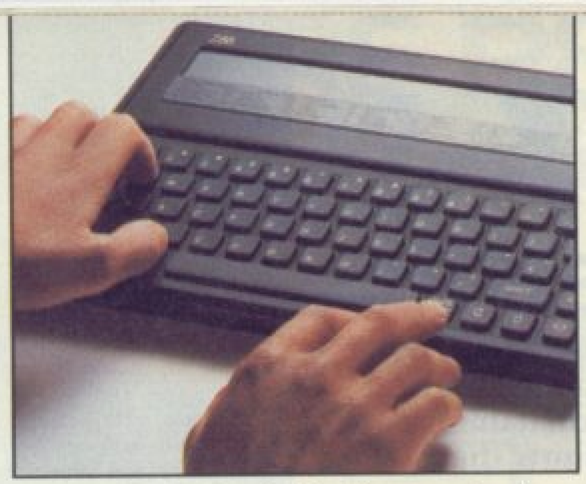
Printing RS232 cable connects the Z88 to popular printers. Cables can also be made up for virtually any RS232-compatible printer.

Text- and data-interchange Resident software formats data for IBM-compatible micros with 5¼" or 3½" disc-drives. If your micro can run such popular programs as Wordstar, Lotus 1-2-3 or WordPerfect, you can exchange text and data between it and the Z88. Cable and software available now.

Modem allows text- and data-transmission by telephone.

Power supply Optional mains adapter, or 4 AA batteries. (CMOS technology allows about 20 hours active computing – or about a year of life for RAM if machine is switched off).

Dimensions 11½" x 8¼" x ⅞"; weight: under 2 lb.



Full QWERTY keyboard offers 'silent', moving short-travel keys. Foldaway foot raises the Z88 12½° for comfortable viewing and typing.

ADVANCED INTEGRATED SOFTWARE PACKAGE

The operating system of the Z88 is unique to Cambridge Computer Ltd, supporting as its main in-built software an advanced software package, adapted by Protechnic Ltd for the Z88.

The Z88 automatically preserves data in RAM when switched off.

The software is a set of **spreadsheet** and **word processing** applications, with a sophisticated **help** function, designed from the first as an integrated package which allows text to be run within a spreadsheet, or a spreadsheet to be run within text.

Word-processing facilities include multi-column layout, global search and replace, and embedded calculations, as well as all the normal word-processing activities. The display shows such commands as bold, italics, underlining, and page breaks. Spreadsheet includes text-handling and sorting.

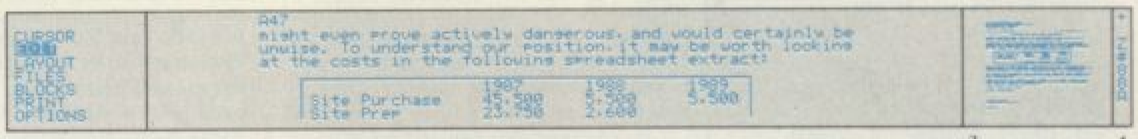
Other built-in software includes **database selection; calculator;** free-form **diary, calendar, real-time clock** and alarm.

An outstanding feature of the Z88 is its ability to switch between tasks within an application, and between applications, without the need to save, exit the package, or restart on return.

While computing a spreadsheet, for example, it is easy to switch directly to the diary, and then go straight back to the spreadsheet – which immediately carries on from the point it had reached.

STATE-OF-THE-ART SUPERTWIST LCD DISPLAY

Supertwist technology represents the state of the art in liquid crystal display. Its massive increase in contrast ratio and viewing angle give a dark blue on grey display that surpasses CRT screens.



1 2 3 4

1. *'Topic bar' – seven general menu options, each supported by function menus.*
2. *Work area displays 8 lines by a full 80 characters.*
3. *Unique screen map shows complete page layout, updated automatically as work goes on.*
4. *Section displays machine status (e.g. battery strength.)*



HOW TO ORDER

The Z88 is available only by mail order. The FREEPOST coupon lists the components of the Z88 system currently available.

The Z88 itself comes supplied with 32K RAM built in, a comprehensive manual, sectionalised to suit both novices and computer experts, and a carrying case.

Your order will be acknowledged with information on the likely despatch date.

If you're not happy with any item you receive, return it in original condition within 10 days of receipt for an immediate refund.

Every item is covered by a one-year guarantee, and will be repaired or replaced free of charge if faulty and returned with proof of purchase date.

CAMBRIDGE COMPUTER LTD

Cambridge Computer Ltd, FREEPOST, Cambridge, CB4 1BR.

IBM TM of International Business Machines. Wordstar TM of MicroPro. Lotus TM of Lotus Development. WordPerfect TM of WordPerfect.

ORDER

To: Cambridge Computer Ltd, FREEPOST, Cambridge, CB4 1BR.
Please supply Z88 system components as shown below.

ITEM	QTY	PRICE EACH £	TOTAL £
Z88 COMPUTER (Special introductory price)		229.95	
MAINS ADAPTER		9.95	
RS232 PRINTER CABLE (Cable supplied with 25-way D connector. Making up other cables is simple: full dealer instructions in the manual.)		9.95	
I/O SOFTWARE/CABLE for IBM transfer. Software to be supplied on tick as applicable			
☐ 5¼" disc (Full instructions included)		14.95	
☐ 3½" disc (Full instructions included)		14.95	
MODEM		99.95	
32K RAM CARTRIDGE		19.95	
128K RAM CARTRIDGE		49.95	
32K EPROM		12.95	
128K EPROM CARTRIDGE		49.95	
U/V ERASER FOR EPROM CARTRIDGE		29.95	
POSTAGE, PACKING AND INSURANCE			7.50
All prices include VAT @ 15%		Total	£

I enclose cheque/money order for £______ payable to Cambridge Computer Ltd.
☐ Tick box if VAT receipt required.

Name______________________ PLEASE PRINT

Address______________________

______________________ Postcode______________________ SUS 704

COIN-OP FUTURE SHOCK

If, like me, you're an arcade freak, then the ATEI must be the ultimate paradise. Once a year coin-op manufacturers and distributors gather from all over the world to show their latest machines.

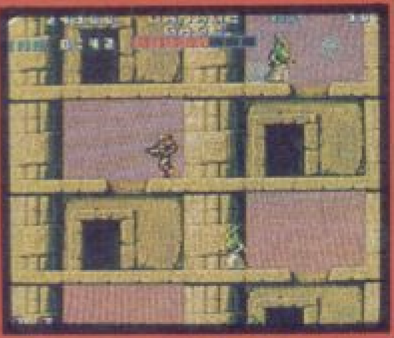
All the new games for the next six months were on show, and though I was disappointed that there were no 'biggies' like Wec Le Mans or Out Run, there were masses of the more conventional type shoot 'em ups and simulations. After all, you can't expect hi-tech hydraulic systems to sprout out of every game you play

Defender/Nemesis scenarios were evident and cropped up in two or three games. Side Arms from Capcom follows this theme of flying from left to right down a tunnel, blasting baddies and fighting off the alien mother ship or monster baddie at the end of each level. However, it's sufficiently different from its predecessors and very addictive. You control a little chappie with a jet pack on his back – not a ship. Using your lasers, you attempt to annihilate all the enemy can throw at you. Pick up POW pills to increase or decrease your speed and a variety of extras like a Shot Gun and Mega Bazooka Launcher can be collected to increase your fire power. Very fast, very playable and I'll be surprised if we don't see this appearing as a coin-op conversion before the end of the year.





Soldier of Light from Taito (also called Xain'd Sleena) is another of the one-man-against-the-aliens type and includes some very pretty graphics. The idea is to rid four planets in your solar system of all resident nasties. As soon as you've chosen a planet your own personal spaceship whisks you off to start the clean-up operation. Each planet has its own difficulty level and comes with its own variety of monsters, some earthbound, some flying, some cunning and others just plain stupid. The terrains are hilly and you'll often have to nip into an alien hideout to find the baddies. This is where your jet boots come in handy. They allow you to take king size leaps to attack the fliers, leap over hillocks and the like. Once you've cleaned up the planet hop into your space craft and nip into space for a spot of alien bashing and asteroid blasting. Both come at you in huge quantities and your trigger finger will have to work overtime if you're to blast a path through them. This game will make somebody a very nice conversion.





The Red Eagles are attempting to take over the world and it's your task in Konami's Gryzor to halt them in their tracks. Gryzor is very much the lone hero type where you take on the masses single-handed to save the world. Success depends on how fast your trigger finger is and whether you're any good at dodging bullets and the baddies. The first stage is set above ground and is fairly simple – just leap around the screen blasting the Eagles and leaping down on them for a spot of one to one combat. Later levels take you under ground into their hideout which consists of a maze of corridors fortified by impassable electric fences. The only way through is to stand in front of a fence and try to blast the control panel at the far end of the corridor. Eagles pop out from behind corners to take horribly accurate pot shots at you and survival is very much a matter of quick reflexes. Eventually you'll succeed, the electric forcefield will disappear and you can proceed on to the next level. You'll soon come to open areas where the Eagles come out of hiding and attack from all directions. Hopefully by this time you'll have found some power items which give you greater fire power such as fireballs, a spread gun or laser gun. Gryzor is tricky, fast and addictive.

Taito's Darius is an incredible three screens wide which have been so cleverly put together that there are no joining lines to be seen. It means that you can see what's being thrown at you long before the enemy strikes. Another unusual feature is the vibrating seat which makes your bum shake with each explosion heightening the impression of the inside of a battleship cockpit.

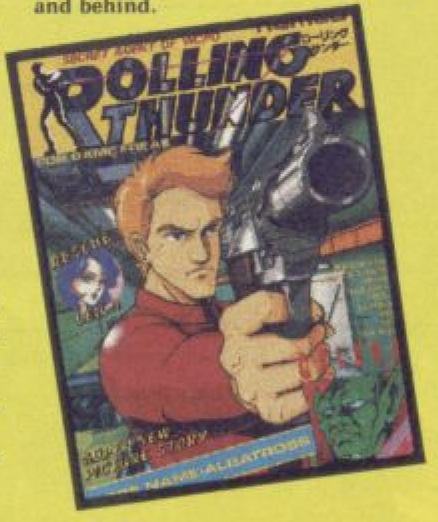
Darius is very fast and is much more fun when there are two of you sitting side by side blasting in unison. There are Power-Up units to be collected which increase your shields and firepower, masses of aliens which travel from right to left towards you, but beware the stationary alien outposts attached to the ground and ceiling. At the end of each level a magnificent monster battle fish appears requiring a number of shots to kill, there are 26 of these each with its own weakspot and they've been given some wonderful names like Fatty Glutton H, Red Shears D and Big Rajarnn G. There are five areas – space cave, city, mountains, ocean water base and Van Alley radiation belt (what ever that may be!). After killing a fishy monster you are given a choice of paths and can choose the next zone to travel to. It's all extremely fast and very noisy and you may even lose weight playing it!





Shackled from Data East looks stunningly like Gauntlet in layout though the plot differs somewhat. The idea is to search a maze for your eight buddies who are locked in cells, though to open the doors you have to first find the right key. There are, of course, lots of nasties lurking around each corner and the more mates you've rescued the better your chances of survival. Each prisoner has a weapon to deal with each fight. There are about 112 stages and dotted around are bonus objects which give extra fire power. There's also a continue play option which is very useful if you're just about to die and don't wnat to go back to the beginning of the game. Unlike Gauntlet, Shackled is for two players only, though the second player can join in at any time and as with all games of this type it's very much the case of 'the more the merrier'.

Namco's Rolling Thunder looks like it's doing well in the arcades, though it's not a game I care for a great deal. Namco also released Elevator Action which I thought far more addictive. The sprites in Rolling Thunder are surprisingly large and very well drawn with some clear background graphics. You control the hero on a mission to rescue his mate who's being held hostage by a bunch of hooded hoodlums. The game involves a lot of leaping from level to level, dodging and shooting the hoods and searching for extra ammo. Movement is graceful, balletic almost, but in my opinion a trifle slow. The hoods fight dirty with a lot of head height kicks, so a good tip is to kneel down and shoot, that way they miss and you score. Signposts tell which doors to open to find extra ammo but be careful as the baddies also lurk behind them and are liable to pop out just when you think the coast is clear. As you travel deeper into the game the number of hoods increases and they often overwhelm you by attacking from both the front and behind.



Bally/Stente's Street Football is played – no surprise really, in a street. It's footie the American way. Lots of cars to avoid and manhole covers to trip over if you don't watch your step. It's three-a-side with a can marking the touchdown area. Control is by rollerball which is quite hard to master at first and there are buttons to press to switch control to another player and for high and low passes. The idea is to score four downs to achieve a touchdown but its quite difficult to get the ball into your area without being intercepted by your opponents. White lines mark the sections of the street which are out of bounds though passing chevvys, dogs and paperboys ignore these totally and tend to cause chaos whenever you've got the ball. I found it very frustrating remembering to switch players so that the ball was passed quickly to my end of the street. More often than not, my players ended up running round aimlessly in circles, and I was hopelessly incompetent at intercepting the ball■

Clare Edgeley

CLIVE'S NEW Z88

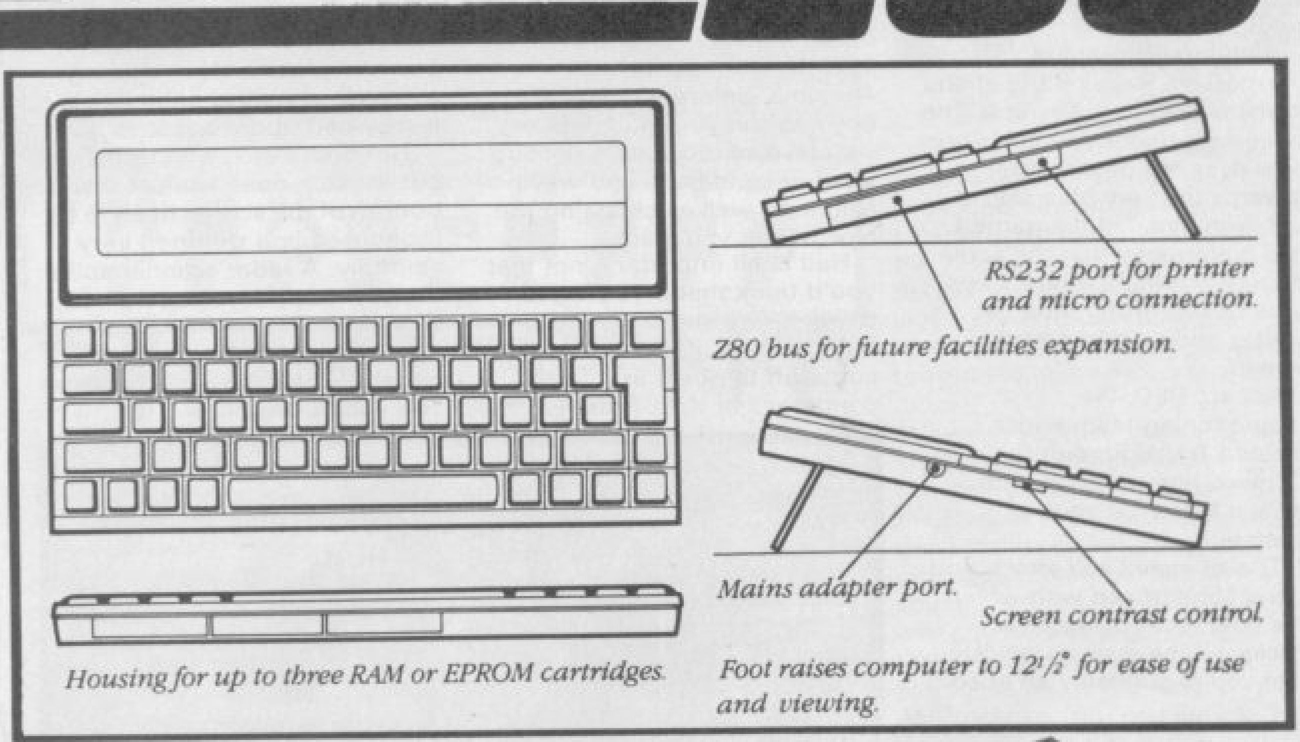
So what's this Z88 micro then? Well, it's the first thing Sir Clive has done since 'the troubles' and the Z88 is what Pandora portable turned into.

A portable computer has long been one of Clive Sinclair's most cherished ambitions.

The QL was going to be portable. One-Per-Desk was going to be (almost) portable.

But only the Spectrum was really portable, travelling from Cambridge to Brentwood in the back of Alan Sugar's truck.

And now here's the Z88. Unveiled at the Which Computer? Show on February 17 to muted wonderment, this 21lb, A4-sized technogimmick is in the best Sinclair traditions. It's black. It's cheap. And it's not finished.



The main features of this first sugar-free Sinclair (well, Cambridge Computer, ackcheloi are the super-twist liquid-crystal display, the Z80 processor, the keyboard, the built in software, the storage modules and the price. The main non-features are the tape port, the compatibility, and the extra software. And, I suspect, the battery life.

Twist and show it

Let's start with the super-twist LCD. Sinclair has long been less than ardent fans of the technology. In the late '70s, they published a 'consumer report' saying that nobody liked LCDs and as a result the new Sinclair LED calculators would beat the likes of Casio hands-down. Ahem.

However, the new super-twist is really rather good. Legible, low power and fast. Even Clive Sinclair likes it. From the brief glimpse obtained at the Which Computer Show, it does seem that it ain't half bad. Super-twist, by the way, derives from the way in which the liquid crystal molecules contort themselves to block the light when a voltage is applied.

The custom chip (there are only four chips in total – like the old ZX81 really) which manages the display goes overboard a bit. Hardware windowing, sophisticated scrolling, hardware support for mixed text and graphics... if only that sort of thing had gone into a games machine instead of a business LCD micro. Sigh.

The Z80 processor itself is a super low-power version. The magic letters in this case are CMOS, a kind of electrics that takes very little current and work rather well. Of late, CMOS Z80's have been getting cheaper, too. And it's completely compatible with older, thirstier versions.

The keyboard is a bit strange. Billed as 'silent', it appears to be made out of a harder Sinclair latex than the Spectrum. It takes a bit of getting used to, but isn't actively fingerhitting bad.

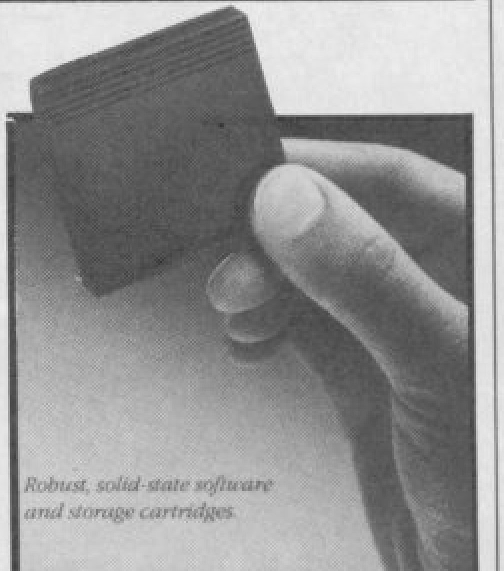
So who's going to buy it? Well, the built-in software is a real give away of who Sinclair hopes will buy the beast. An integrated word processor and spreadsheet tops the list, followed by a diary, alarm clock, simple database and a calculator. There's also (whisper it) BBC Basic. No games. And at launch, which is the basis of this little article, it wasn't finished.

The key to the operation of the whole machine are the storage cartridges. These consist of Rom or Ram chips, encased in a black plastic box uncannily like microdrive, and which slot into the front of the machine. As many as 3 Mbytes can be stored in boxes.

And everything is powered by four Walkman-sized batteries. 20 hours of working are promised. Sceptics remember the 20 mile range of the C5 which proved to be closer to 5. There is no facility provided for rechargeable batteries, although something could be fudged by the mains adaptor port...

And the price. £230 to you? Bear in mind the massive 32K of Ram, and the complete lack of a tape port. Bear in mind that nobody's actually got one yet. And then think about the QL.

Me, I think I'll wait...■



▲Bet you think this is a microdrive. Acutally it's a 'robust solid-state software and storage cartridge' . . . ho hum.



SAILING

It's a life on the ocean wave. The slap of the sails, the spin of the compass, the clash of the attributes.

Actually, the graphics are what make this simulation.

Sailing puts you at the helm, and various other parts as you're thrown around, of a racing yacht.

Nothing will prepare you for the massive wave rolling at you from the back of the screen. The wave rolls under you and your bow rises out of the water towards the very blue sky.

Before I loaded the game I had nightmares that the screen display would be a bird's eye view of two grotty little flat sprites gliding around the screen.

Not so. OED, the programming team which created **Trivial Pursuit** for Domark, has come up with what'll surely be another stunner.

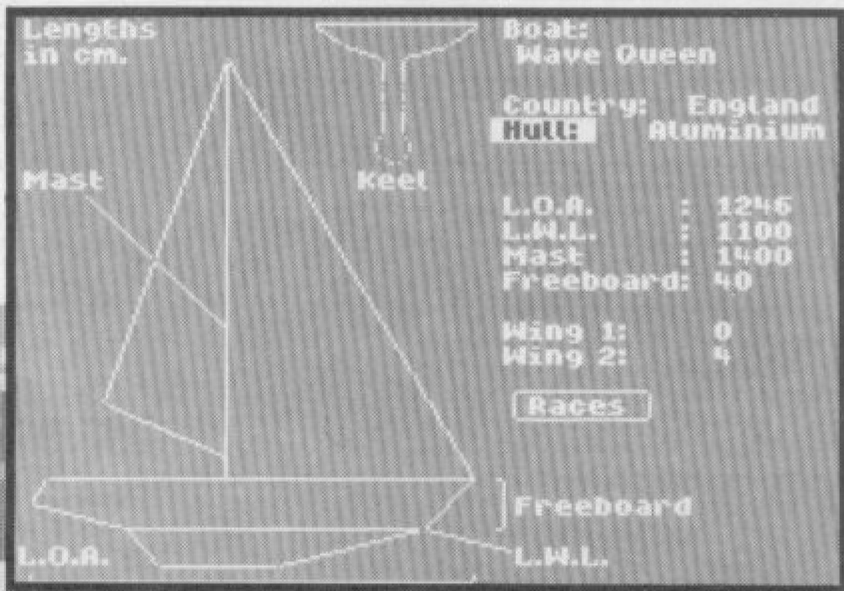
The spangled sea effect, and the graphic speed with which the boat races through its paces, hit the eyes so quickly that you're suddenly all at sea, at a loss to know what to do.

You start near the bottom of an international racing league table – c'est la vie – with the option of taking on one of three other losers – try Italy or Agentina. Before you actually begin to sail you must first set your level of difficulty, selecting weather conditions and wave height, as well as choosing the type of hull you want.

Hull is all important, not that you'd think that if you'd been there. If you choose a metal hull, such as aluminium, you'll come off the best in rough conditions or if, horrors, you hit another boat. The down-side is metal hulls hang low in the water. Wooden hulls, however, are lightweight but are easily damaged by waves or the bows of other boats – cutting across the bows of another boat is frowned upon, but legal.

The boat has few controls, but those it does have at the bottom of the screen need to be monitored and trimmed very carefully. A radar scanner splits the course up into square sectors. It shows the two participating yachts as dots, hopefully chasing each other. The yachts are ultra-manoeuvreable when you least expect it – just watch the compass twirl. Course info is given at the beginning of the game – along with a weather report – so make sure you keep your bow pointed towards the next course marker buoy. If you stray too far from these bouys you'll be disqualified as out of bounds.

In some ways **Sailing** is similar to **Football Manager**. There's a league up which you can climb, and races – games – you've got to take part in before you can move above your



FACTS BOX

A unique seabound simulation. Puts you at the mercy of the elements rather than in a pilot's seat. Very clever

SAILING
Label: Activision
Author: ODE
Price: £8.95
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★★

SILENT SERVICE

Dive, dive, dive. No, I'm not moaning about my new flat but I have just seen the latest strategy simulation from Microprose and I am at a loss for words. It's really very, very good.

It's difficult to know where to begin. Running a US WW2 submarine through hostile seas is no easy job and the array of interior and exterior displays, maps and controls in this simulation is very daunting.

For a start you've got to decide upon the reality level. Do you want limited visibility, do you want the worry that some of your torpedoes could be duds, or do you want to increase the strength and agility of the Japanese convoys you're supposed to scupper? It's up to you, but when you're a rookie commander you should concentrate on guiding your sub above the clear water and taking target practice rather than diving and getting lost.

There are three major control screens: the bridge on top, the conning tower which is the control centre, and the maps and status reports. If you decide to forget about reality levels it'll be a lovely sunny day on the bridge. Scanning around the horizon you'll find a group of islands, the sea, and the enemy convoy.

It's target practice time so select the conning tower control room. There are six operations stations in the tower.

If you're looking for action the most important station is the periscope. When you get one of the convoy ships in the middle of your sight a two-line measuring image appears, framing the ship and making targetting easy. The target will of course be moving. It'll probably be zig zagging if you have that reality level set and you'll have to take that into account when you loose off a torpedo.

When you do press the *Fire* button for the best effect go on to the bridge make sure you're on the surface, though. You'll see the torp ploughing through the water, near the surface, and if you're lucky there's a red

FACTS BOX

This submarine warfare game is the best and most complex simulations to be released for months

SILENT SERVICE
Label: Microprose
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K
Joystick: various

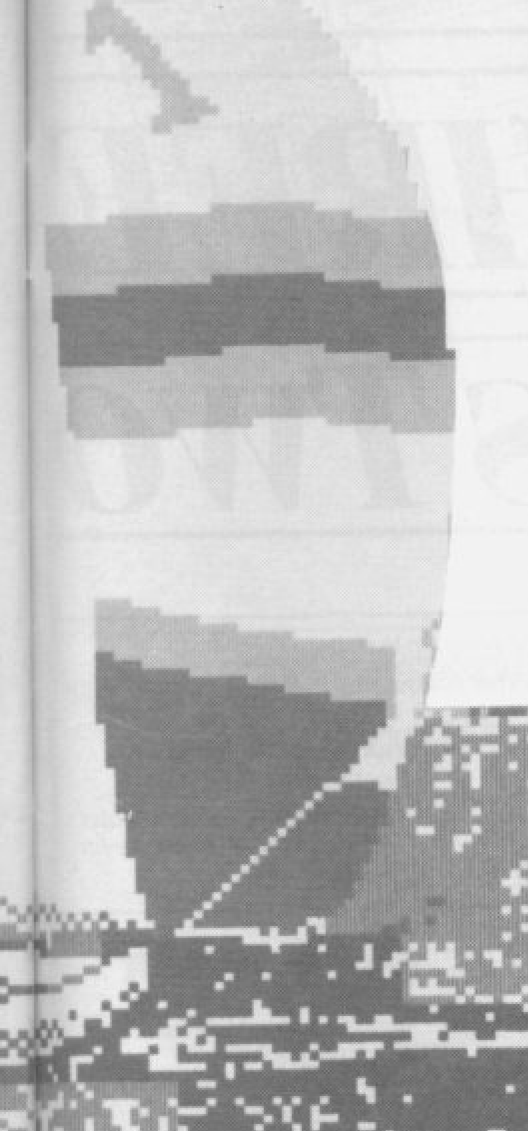
Reviewer: John Gilbert

★★★★★

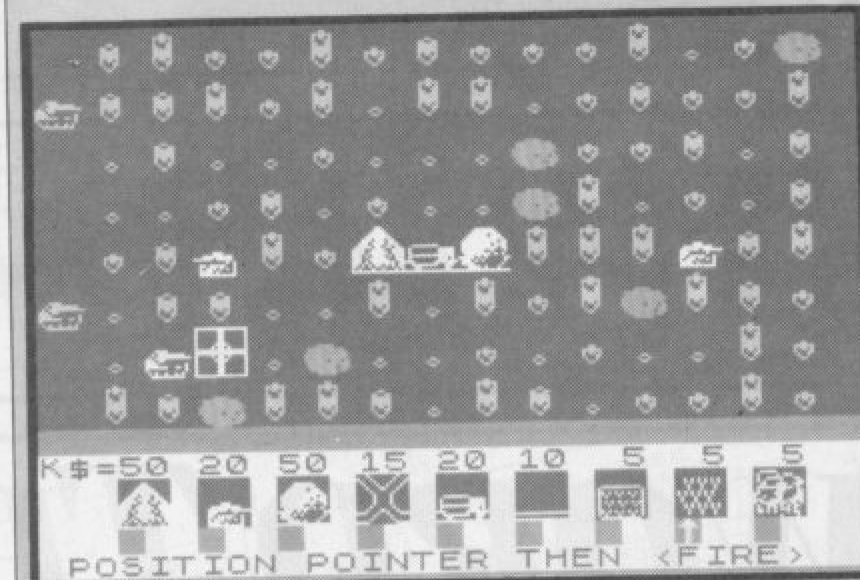


competitors. But then, **Sailing**, like CRL's **Endurance** and **Formula One** simulations, has arcade elements which breaks it out of the strategy market – and I don't mean a bunch on pin figures legging up a flat football pitch. It truely creates the atmosphere of the sea.

I for one see it as a triumph of simulation■



STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW



PRESIDENT

Here we have the long awaited (ie much delayed) **President** from Addictive. The firm still seems to be promoting all its products on the grounds that Kevin Toms did quite a good job on **Fooball Manager** and therefore all his subsequent programs will be equally good. Stands to reason, doesn't it?

President is a definite ego-trip for the prospective player. It's only in a game of this type that you get to control a whole country and thus make all the important decisions: how food is distributed, where to dig for oil, which countries to attack etc.

The game is split up into lots and lots of different sections, each involving relatively little, except making decisions. There are no aliens to kill or insurgent guerillas to wurp. Yup, **President's** another strategy game.

Everything happens, logically enough, in a cycle of months. At the end of each month you're informed as to exactly what the rest of the World thinks of your rule, how other parties are doing and how things are generally going. Every twenty-four months (bi-annually) there is an election. Obviously, smarter players will make all the tougher, more unpopular decisions just after an election and boulster public support with a few vote-winning choices toward the end of your term of office.

FACTS BOX

A fairly entertaining souped-up Kingdom derivative with a marginally more interesting setting. Not one for action freaks

PRESIDENT
Label: Addictive
Price: £8.95
Author: Kevin Toms
Joystick: various
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

★★★★☆

Finding yourself in a fairly stereotypical middle-eastern country, oil plays a big part in the state of the nation. Indeed, most of the action takes place in oil-orientated areas. The entire country is shown on the screen along with tokens denoting tanks, oil production plants, storage tanks, roads, crop areas and suchlike. You can survey areas for oil and, where necessary, plant a production rig.

You can also lay down roads and crossroads, aiding transport of goods and food. Occasionally a nasty neighbouring country will launch an airbourne assault on your oil fields which is usually a bit of a setback. It's possible to deplete the magnitude of such attacks by careful positioning of anti-aircraft guns that can blow away any unwanted flying types.

Ground attacks will be initiated by outside forces too, and you will have to guide your tanks into battle to protect your land. Such escapades are in fact a bit weedy as the UDG's jump around rather unconvincingly. One could probably say this section was the token graphics/action part of the game, but that would be totally unfair wouldn't it?

Just as getting your people and crops blown to pieces by enemy jets and tanks is sure to lose you votes, so is the mass starvation of your people or unquelled outbreaks of Malaria, TB etc.

Importing military goods and oil-drilling gear is possible too.

President is certainly a very complex game. It's no great shakes graphically but you could argue that that is what strategy games are all about. It really all boils down to being yet another derivative of the ancient **Kingdom** games. Keep the people happy while running a country. If it's your scene, it'll probably be quite exciting. And fans of Kevin Tom's previous efforts will find much to admire and generally go ape■

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC

flash and the quarry will start to sink. If you hit it on the bows or stern the other ships in the convoy may rally to protect it and come after you with depth charges.

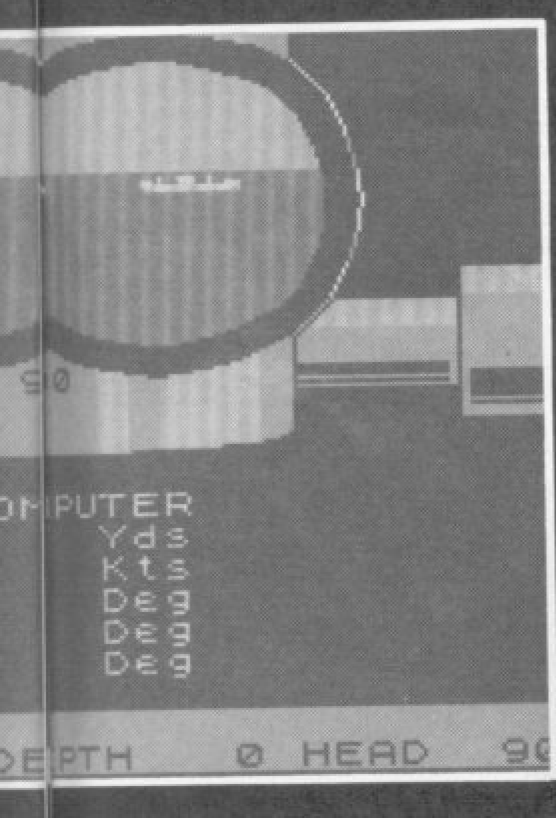
If you're counter attacked you dive. Blow all tanks, go as deep as you can and stop engines. Run silent, run deep, as I'm sure Robert Mitchum said in one of his films. In this situation the map station becomes the most important part of the Conning Tower. Push the joystick to the right and the little commander standing in front of the periscope will move to the map station. Press *Fire* and an overview of the coastline with radar scanning of ships in the area and your position will be flashed on to the screen. You can also zoom in on particular features of the map using a box cursor. That's useful if you want to find places to hide around the coastline or if you're in deep water and can't use the periscope to see where you are.

Silent Service is the most powerful, convincing, simulation game I've seen for some time.

At first sight it seems hopelessly complex but, once you read the two poster-sized instruction inserts, which include an enemy ship spotting chart you'll see that convoy bashing at its simplest level is easy. Then you can begin to progress and use more of the simulations facilities to become a terror of the Japanese shipping lanes.

You'll also be able to take on one of the five special missions outlined in the instructions. The situations include circling around a convoy to make an attack, patrolling enemy waters at night on the surface attacking while submerged and escaping from a burning flotilla in shallow waters. All the situations are crushingly difficult and require mastery of this excellent simulation as well as a great deal of patience.

I was completely captivated■



TASWORD 128

TASWORD THREE

TASWORD PLUS TWO



Buy a Tasword for your Spectrum and get a word processing program that is:

Easy to use. *Just load the program and type in your text. If you do need help then it's there on the Tasword screen.*

Packed full of features. *The new generation of Taswords set a new standard in word processing on the Spectrum computers.*

Designed for YOUR computer. *There is a Tasword for each Spectrum computer. Each Tasword is designed to make the best use of the keyboard and memory on your Spectrum.*

ZX SPECTRUM

TASWORD TWO

THE WORD PROCESSOR

TASWORD TWO for the ZX 48K Spectrum cassette £13.90 microdrive cartridge £15.40

"Without doubt the best utility I have reviewed for the Spectrum"
HOME COMPUTING WEEKLY APRIL 1984

"If you have been looking for a word processor, then look no further"
CRASH JUNE 1984

With 64 characters per line on the screen and a host of useful features TASWORD TWO is the ideal cassette based word processing package for the Spectrum owner.

TASPRINT

THE STYLE WRITER

TASPRINT for the ZX 48K Spectrum cassette £9.90 microdrive cartridge £11.40

A must for dot matrix printer owners! Print your program output and listings in a choice of five impressive print styles. TASPRINT utilises the graphics capabilities of dot matrix printers to form, with a double pass of the printhead, output in a range of five fonts varying from the futuristic Data-Run to the hand writing simulation of Palace Script. A TASPRINT gives your output originality and style! The TASPRINT fonts are shown to the right together with a list of compatible printers.

TASCOPY

THE SCREEN COPIER

TASCOPY for the ZX Spectrum with Interface 1 cassette £9.90 microdrive cartridge £11.40

The Spectrum TASCOPY is for use with the RS232 output on ZX Interface 1. It produces both monochrome (in a choice of two sizes) and large copies in which the different screen colours are printed as different shades. With TASCOPY you can keep a permanent and impressive record of your screen pictures and diagrams. A list of printers supported by TASCOPY is given to the left.

TAS-DIARY

THE ELECTRONIC DIARY

TAS-DIARY for the ZX 48K Spectrum and microdrives. Cassette £9.90

Keep an electronic day-to-day diary on microdrive! TAS-DIARY includes a clock, calendar, and a separate screen display for every day of the year. Invaluable for reminders, appointments, and for keeping a record of your day. The data for each month is stored as a separate microdrive file so that your data for a year is only constrained by the microdrive capacity. TAS-DIARY will work for this year, next year, and every year up to 2100! Supplied on cassette for automatic transfer to microdrive.

TASMAN PRINTER

INTERFACE

TASPRINT PRINTER INTERFACE for the ZX Spectrum £29.90
RS232 Cable for ZX Interface 1 £14.50

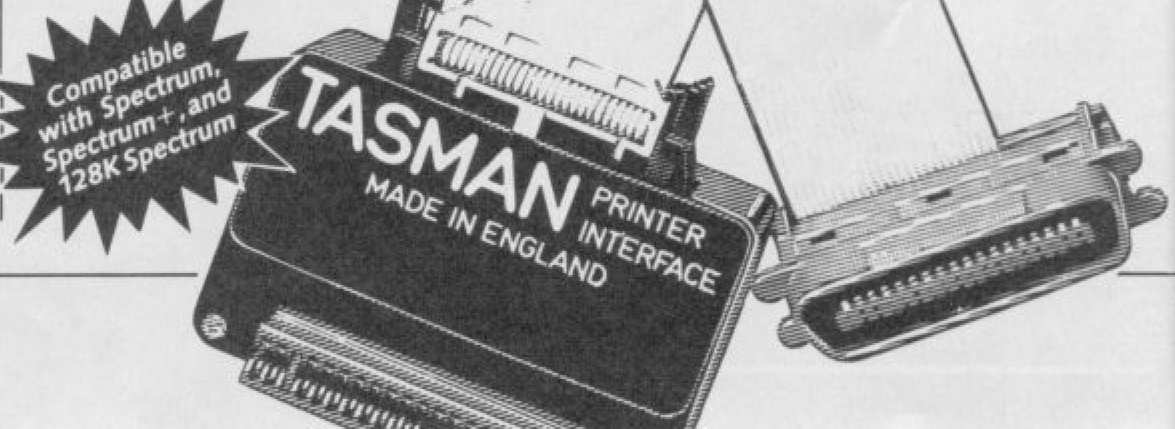
Plug into your Spectrum and drive any printer fitted with the Centronics standard parallel interface. Supplied complete with ribbon cable and driving software. The user changeable interface software makes it easy to send control codes to your printer using the method so successfully pioneered with TASWORD TWO. The cassette contains fast machine code high resolution full width SCREEN COPY SOFTWARE for Epson, Mannesmann Tally, Shinwa, Star, Tandy Colour Graphic (in colour!) printers. TASCOPY shaded screen copy software for this interface (value £9.90) is INCLUDED in this package.

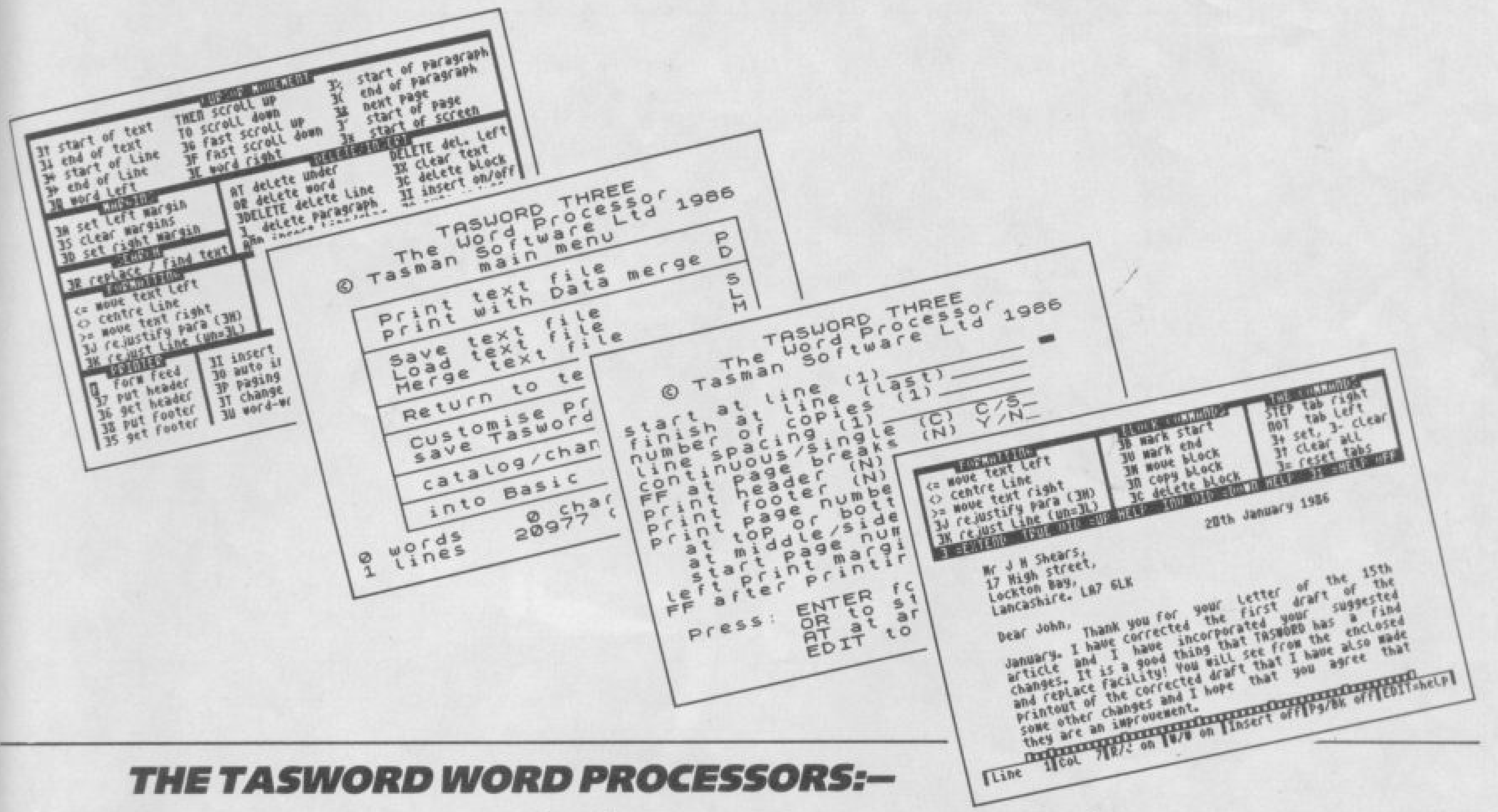
The TASCOPIES and TASPRINTS drive all Epson compatible eight pin dot-matrix printers e.g.

		BROTHER M1009
AMSTRAD DMP 2000	NEC PC 8023B-N	BROTHER HR5
EPSON FX-80	MANNESMANN TALLY MT-80	SHINWA CP-80
EPSON RX-80	STAR DMP 501/515/5610	DATAC PANTHER
EPSON MX-80 TYPE III	COSMOS-80	DATAC PANTHER II

COMPACTA - bold and heavy, good for emphasis
DATA-RUN - A FUTURISTIC SCRIPT
LECTURA LIGHT - clean and pleasing to read
MEDIAN - a serious business-like script
PALACE SCRIPT - a distinctive flowing font

TASPRINT output shown at less than half-size.





THE TASWORD WORD PROCESSORS:—

TASWORD THREE — for the ZX 48K Spectrum — Microdrive £16.50

TASWORD 128 — for the ZX Spectrum 128 — Cassette £13.90

TASWORD PLUS TWO — for the ZX Spectrum + 2 — Cassette £13.90

TASWIDE
THE SCREEN STRETCHER

TASWIDE for the ZX 48K Spectrum cassette £5.50

With this machine code utility you can write your own Basic programs that will, with normal PRINT statements, print onto the screen in the compact lettering used by TASWORD TWO. With TASWIDE you can double the information shown on the screen!

TASWORD THREE
FOR OPUS DISCOVERY

A special version of TASWORD THREE for the Opus Discovery disc drive. Disc £19.50

ZX SPECTRUM 128
TASWORD 128
THE WORD PROCESSOR

TASWORD 128 for the ZX Spectrum 128 cassette £13.90

TASWORD 128 has been especially developed to use the additional memory of the 128K Spectrum. This gives text files that are over 60K long – this is about ten thousand words! TASWORD 128 has all the features of TASWORD THREE (mail merge only when transferred to microdrive). TASWORD 128 is supplied on, and will run on, cassette. TASWORD 128 is also readily transferred to microdrive by following instructions supplied with the program.

SINCLAIR QL
QL is a trademark of Sinclair Research Ltd

TASCOPY QL
THE SCREEN COPIER

TASCOPY QL for the Sinclair QL microdrive cartridge £12.90

TASCOPY QL adds new commands to QL Superbasic. Execute these commands to print a shaded copy of the screen. Print the entire screen or just a specified window. TASCOPY QL also produces large "poster size" screen copies on more than one sheet of paper which can be cut and joined to make the poster.

TASPRINT QL
THE STYLE WRITER

TASPRINT QL for the Sinclair QL microdrive cartridge £19.95

TASPRINT QL includes a screen editor used to modify files created by other programs, such as QUILL, or by the user from Basic. These modified files include TASPRINT control characters and may be printed, using TASPRINT, in one or more of the unique TASPRINT fonts.

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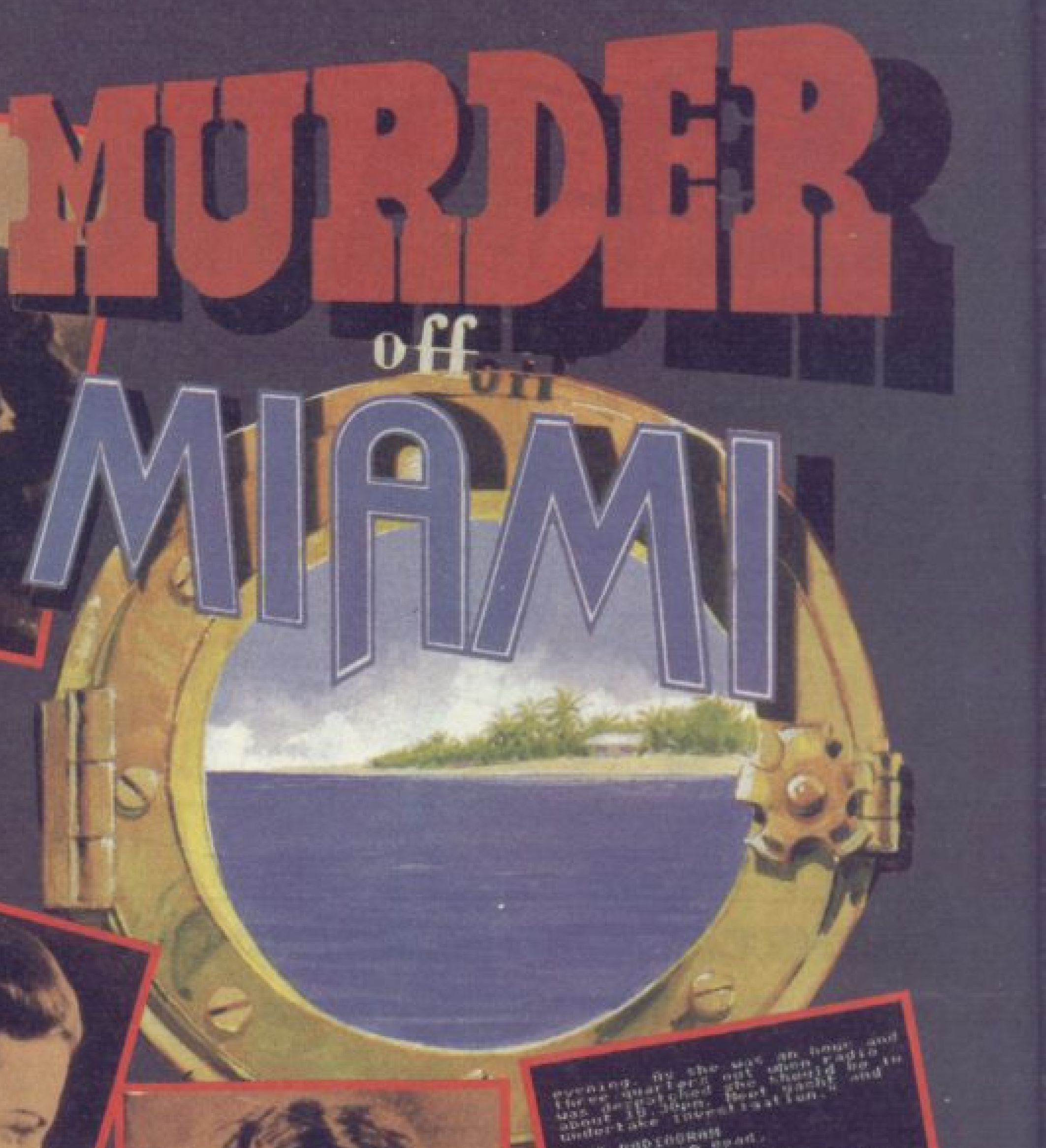
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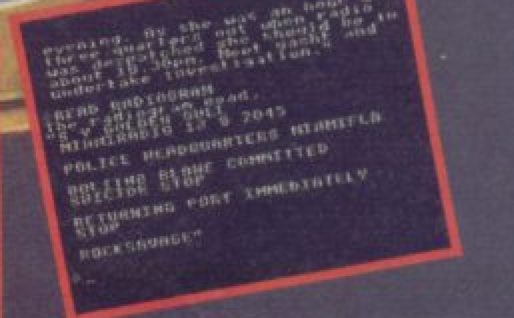
MURDER off MIAMI

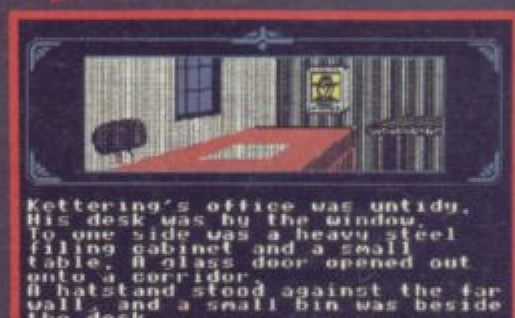












▲ **Just a selection of the possible suspects in the mysterious case of the death of Bolitho Blane**

Murder off Miami is the latest product to flow from the fertile pen of Delta 4's Fergus McNeill and is being marketed by CRL. As with previous Fergus productions, the programming problems have been left in the capable hands of Gilsoft's authoring programmes, **Quill** and **Illustrator**.

Unlike our Fergy's most recent forays into adventure writing, **Murder off Miami** is not a pastiche, although it does owe its genesis to a book. The original was one of an interesting little series put together by thriller writer Dennis Wheatley (grandfather of Dominic, one of the creatures behind Eureka) back in the 1930s.

You got a large format book which was ostensibly a real police report of a murder investigation. In the book, you had all the memos, scraps of paper and transcripts of interrogations plus all the clues – either in photographic form or in reality – hair, blood, bullets. There were even little plastic bags with cigarette ends and fibres from under corpses fingernails! You had to wade through this little lot and work out whodunnit. Anyone interested will soon be able to pick up a copy as the series is being republished in the summer.

The books were perfect for adventure games it's a surprise that nobody thought of computerising them before.

You play the part of the Detective Kettering. You get the same evidence as contained in the book, although it's presented in different forms. Documents are shown as text on screen: objects are pictured – if you're bright enough to spot them.

So what's the crime? Bolitho Blane, British financier, gets himself dead in mysterious circumstances while on a pleasure cruise off Miami, Florida – *Miami Vice* territory, only 50 years too early, so don't expect designer labels in this one.

You get a plan of the cabins on the yacht, showing where everybody was supposed to be at the fateful hour. Around the plan are pictures of the dramatis personae – people involved – in other words, the suspects.

You start in your office on dry land. There are various objects you might want here, but don't stay too long or you're boss gets narked and fires you. Grab your magnifying glass, read the memo telling you of the suspected crime and cable somebody hands you, then get moving down to the docks to meet the returning holiday yacht.

Once you get on to the yacht all the suspects are gathered in the lounge. Quiz each of them using commands like ASK – SAY TO – or TELL.

The characters may answer, but as most of them are snooty old buffers, they all have their own strong personalities and will only tell you their stories, in reams of text, after some genteel persuasion. They may not tell lies but most stop a long way short of telling all. You are advised to examine everything very carefully. And, as with games sporting similar plots, you can interrogate suspects and witnesses to find out why they know, by typing 'ask x about y'.

The text parser is a little limited but the plot is devious, as one would expect from a combination of Dennis Wheatley and Fergus. I think, though, that the spelling and grammar can only be blamed on Fergus – I'm sure Mr Wheatley knew how to spell 'scandalous' and it's not 'scandellous'.

Quibbles like that aside I suspect that **Murder Off Miami** is going to be dragged into all the big line-ups pretty soon.

As for Fergus – book him, murder one (of the English language)! ■

FACTS BOX

A compelling, if implausible, plot. Not one of Fergus' best but the poster's good fun and it'll take quite some solving

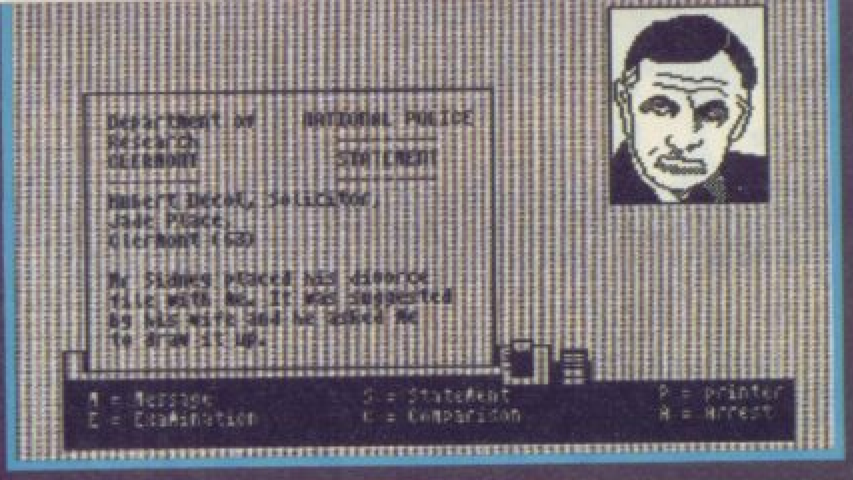
MURDER OFF MIAMI
Label: CRL
Authors: Jason Summerville and Fergus McNeill
Price: £7.95
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★☆

Vera Cruz part II. **Sidney Affair** is more of the same. Obviously **Sidney Affair** inevitably lacks one feature that got **Vera Cruz** a Classic – it was genuinely original.

This one simply gives you two scenes for the murder setting and, obviously a different plot.





SIDNEY AFFAIR

Having said that it really is a lot of fun to play, and in the pure pleasure of puzzle solving it outrates most conventional adventures.

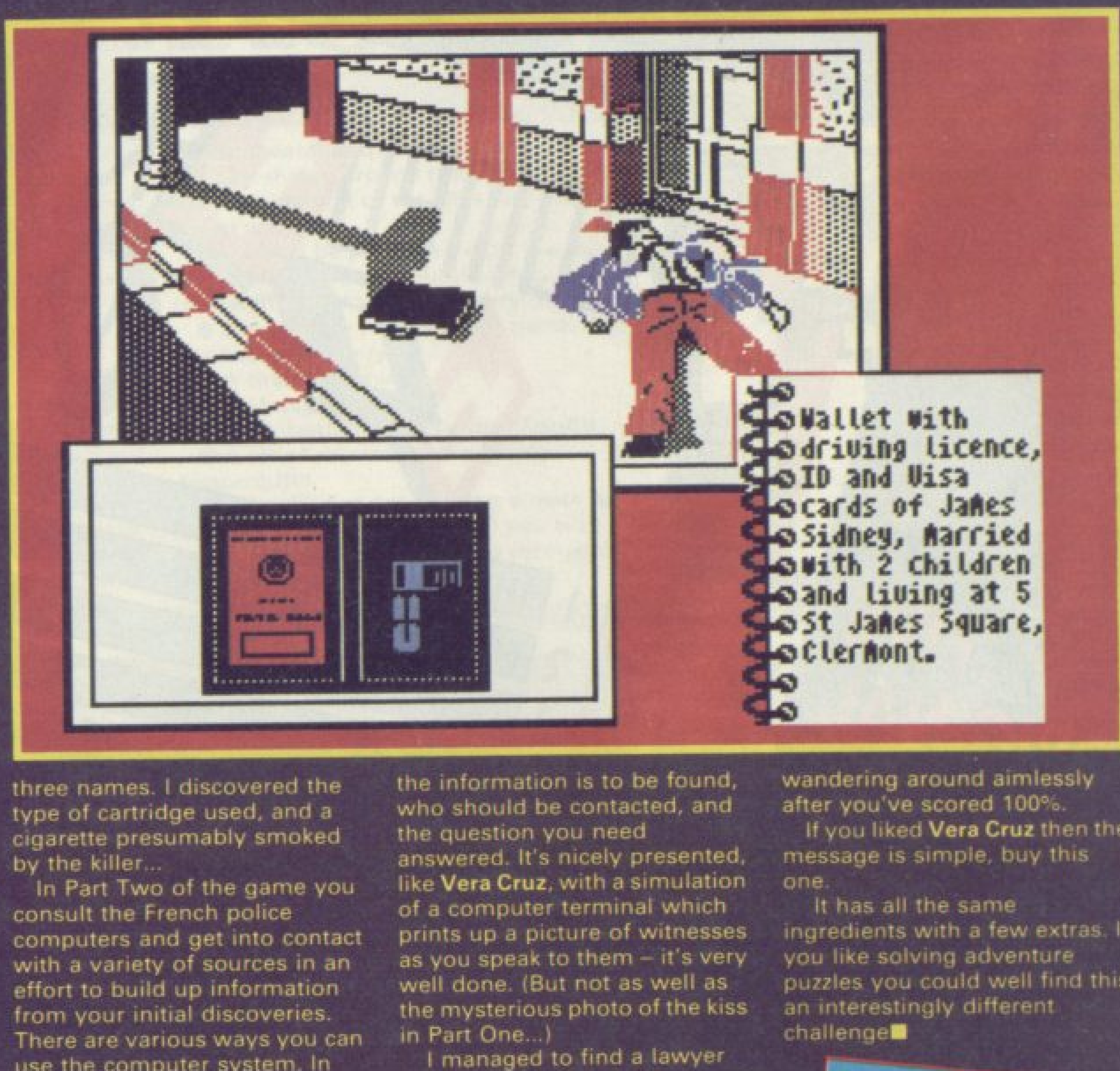
Like **Vera Cruz** there are two sections to the game, loaded separately. In the first you must 'scan' the scene of the crime for clues.

Scene one is a street scene – someone has been murdered and is lying sprawled on the pavement. You move a magnifying glass-shaped icon around the screen – press the space bar to get a 'snapshot' of anything interesting. If there is anything interesting it gets highlighted in a window at the bottom of the screen and basic details appear – write them down or print them out, they are the beginning of your investigations.

From the first screen you can discover, among other things, the name of the murdered person, where he lived and the names and addresses of some of the people they knew.

Want a clue? There is someone called Sidney in the game...

The second picture shows the setting from which the shot was fired – more clues here. Both pictures are well done, with a good deal of detail. It has to be said, however, that on our grotty television seeking out likely looking objects was as much a matter of luck as judgement. I came away with a telephone number and around three names. I discovered the type of cartridge used, and a cigarette presumably smoked by the killer...



In Part Two of the game you consult the French police computers and get into contact with a variety of sources in an effort to build up information from your initial discoveries. There are various ways you can use the computer system. In each you need to specify where the information is to be found, who should be contacted, and the question you need answered. It's nicely presented, like **Vera Cruz**, with a simulation of a computer terminal which prints up a picture of witnesses as you speak to them – it's very well done. (But not as well as the mysterious photo of the kiss in Part One...)

I managed to find a lawyer who had been involved in some very relevant divorce proceedings and learnt some boring facts about the bullets. The way information must be 'assembled' and the way one path of investigation suddenly throws unexpected light on another set of facts is, I would imagine, a lot like real police investigative work. Certainly it is considerably more exciting and addictive than 90% of adventures.

There is one obvious problem with this program, though, fundamentally inherent in the idea – you can only solve it once. This was true of **Vera Cruz** and is essentially true of most conventional adventures – even those that pretend there is additional fun to be gained from wandering around aimlessly after you've scored 100%.

If you liked **Vera Cruz** then the message is simple, buy this one.

It has all the same ingredients with a few extras. If you like solving adventure puzzles you could well find this an interestingly different challenge■



FACTS BOX

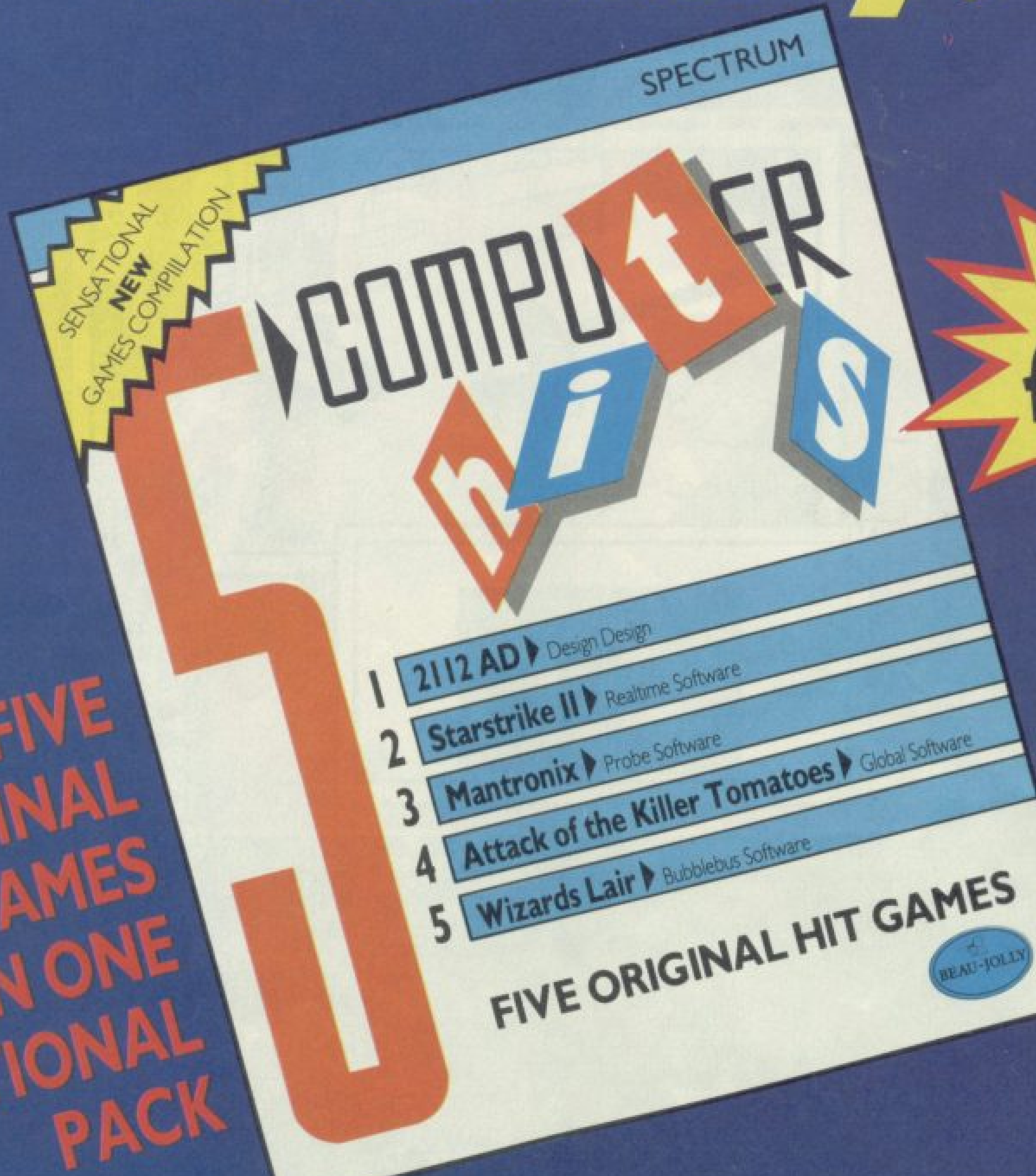
Vera Cruz rides again but this is a welcome program for all that. Fascinating and involving effort from over the channel

THE SIDNEY AFFAIR
Label: Infogrames
Author: Giles Blancon
Price: £8.95
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Graham Taylor

★★★★☆

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COMPETITION

MEET A MAD PERSON!!

If you've ever wondered what sort of mind it takes to come up with such excruciating puns as The Leaning Tower Pizza (made of pizzas) then this competition is the one for you.

Gremlin's series of *Monty* games features some of the most unbelievably strange ideas in microcomputing history and we've decided that it's time to unmask the culprits.

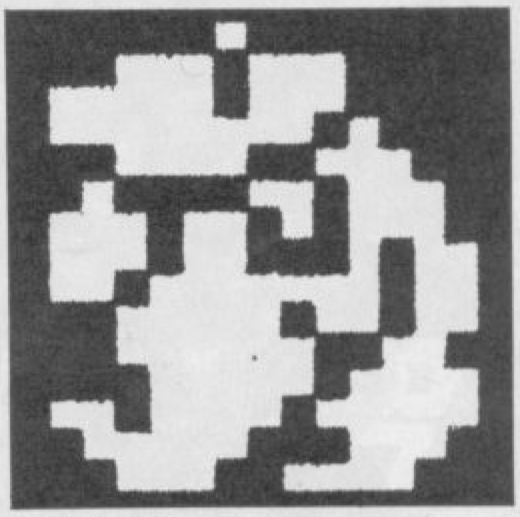
Simply by anwering the simple questions below, you will have the chance of winning an all-expenses-paid trip to sunny Sheffield to meet the Gremlin Team, programmers *et al.* You'll be allowed to grill them as to exactly what goes on in the later stages of the games that you never quite managed to reach. You'll be wined and dined in one of the finest eateries that Sheffield has to offer you'll be shown around the Gremlin offices and see how one of the UK's top software houses works.

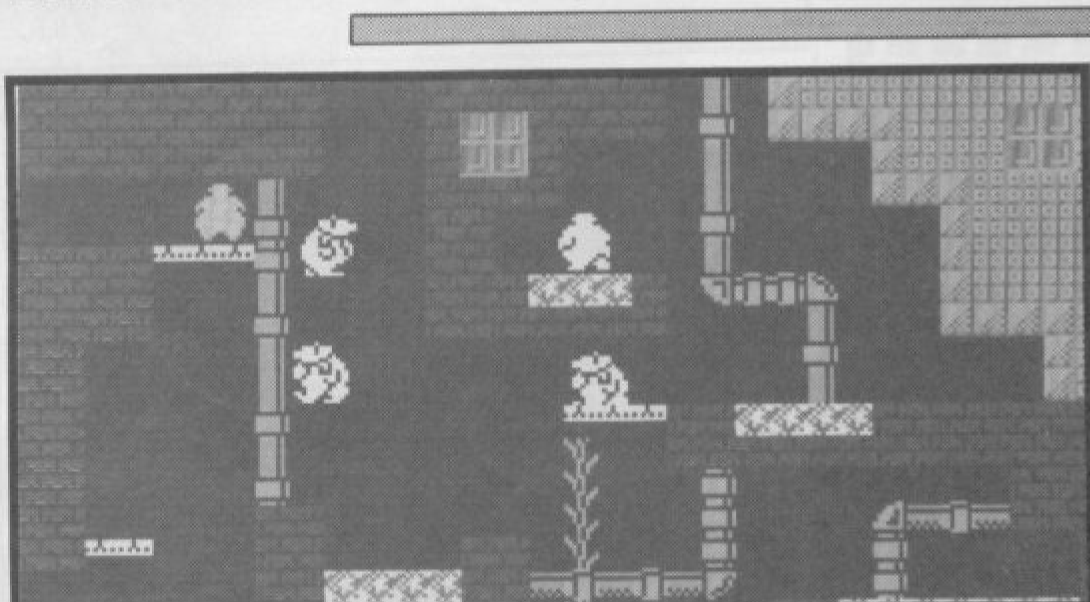
You'll also be presented with the much sought after Gremlin Goodies Bag, contianing the following barmy items:

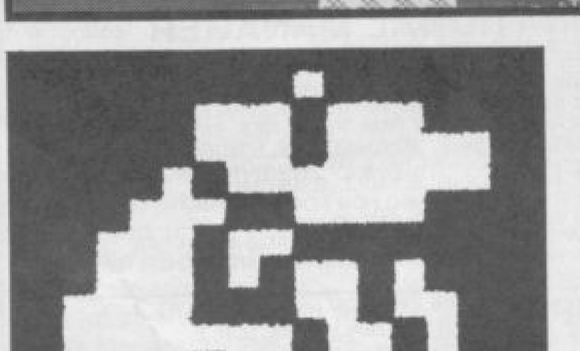
- A copy of te new Gremlin game, *Auf, Wiedersehen Monty!*
- A Gremlin T shirt!!
- A Monty Poster!!!
- A Fantastically cuddly toy Mole!!!!
- A set of extremely rare Monty Postcards!!!!!

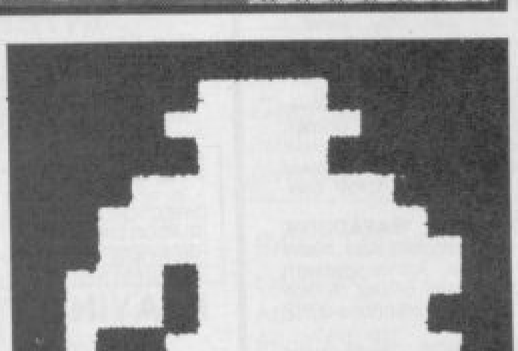
And you'll also get to bring a mate of your choice along with you if you wish.

Twenty runners up will also receive the game and a poster each.









What you have to do

Fill out your anwers on the form below and send it to: "Send Me To Sheffield Compo", Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC12 3AU.

The Questions:

1) Are Moles: (a) Deaf ☐ (b) Blind ☐ (c) Dangerous when baited ☐ (tick one box)

2) Pick the false well-known personality((a) Adiran Mile ☐ (b) Micky Mole ☐ (c) Molesworth Jnr. ☐ (tick one box)

3) How many legs does a mole have 4 (a) ☐ 2 (b) ☐ 5 (c) ☐ (tick one box)

4) Pick the adjective that best describes these questions (a) pathetic ☐ (b) perposterous ☐ (c) quite reasonable ☐ (d) a bit tricky ☐ (e) too tough ☐

Name ....

Address ....

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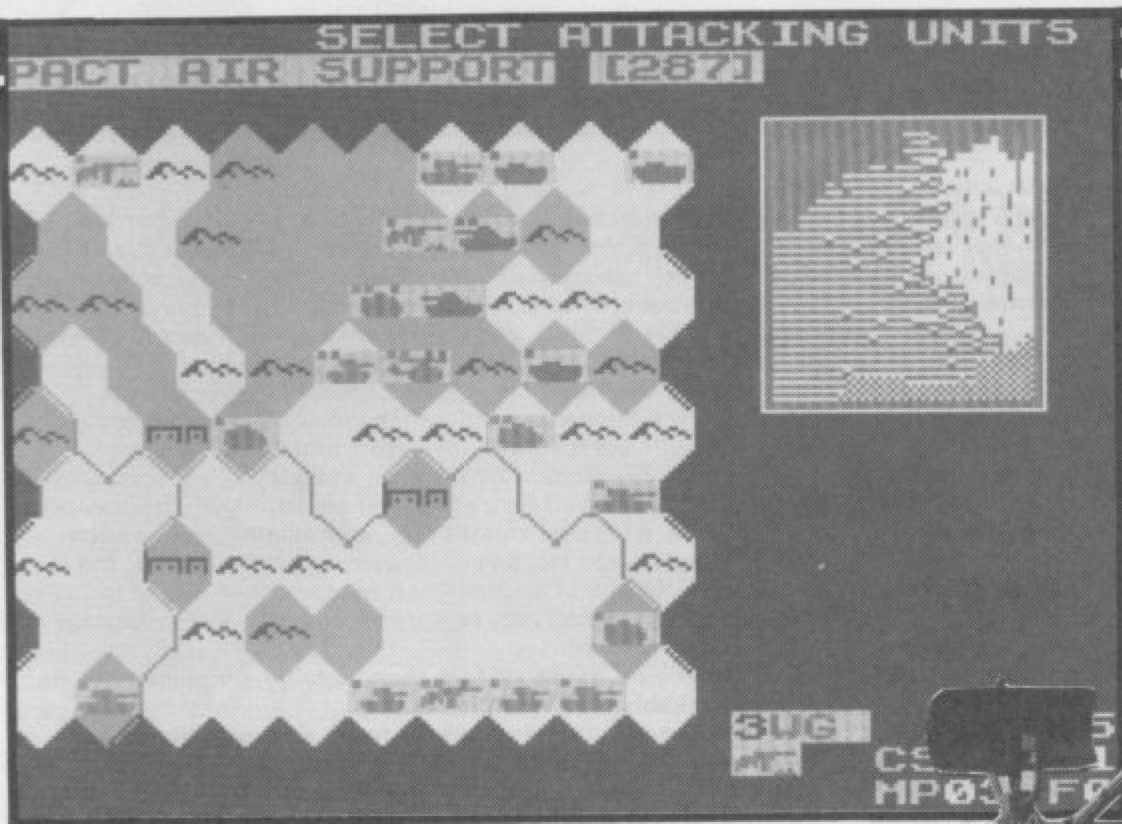
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BATTLEFIELD GERMANY

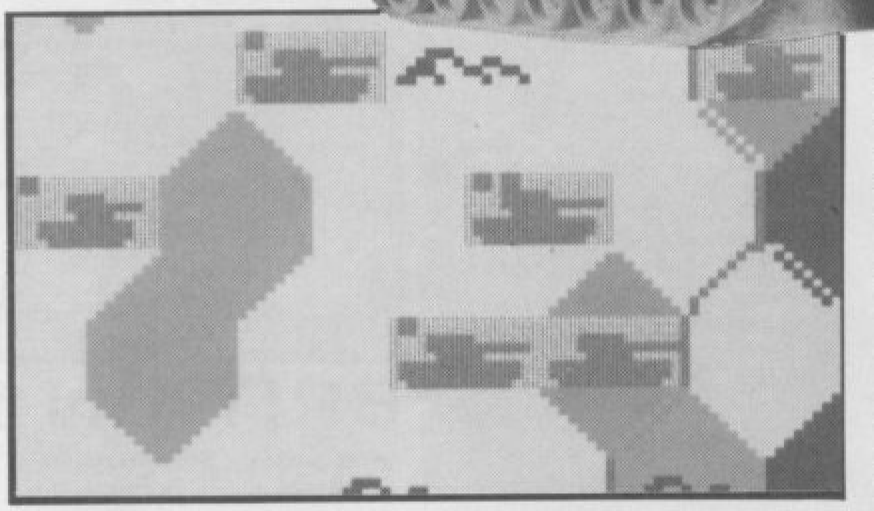
PSS has published a number of wargames over the last couple of years, some of which have been pretty good, and some of which have been downright diabolical.

So **Battlefield Germany** came as a more than pleasant surprise. It is, quite simply, the best game I've seen yet from PSS, and very possibly one of the best five wargames I've ever seen on the Spectrum.

Battlefield Germany is a simulation of combat between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces in central Germany. Either one or two players can participate: if only one is playing, then the computer takes the opposing forces, whichever the player chooses not to be.

Most of the screen is taken up with a tactical map, showing a detailed section of the whole playing area. This is divided up into hexagons, each of which is 30 miles across. Marked on the map are various terrain features – forests, hills, urban areas, mountains and so on. Also shown on the map are the units of each side. Each hexagon covers a lot of ground, so up to four units can occupy the same one. The top unit only is visible, and the presence of others in the same hex is indicated by dots on that unit – up to four.

The units have on them very clear icons showing what type they are – infantry, mechanised infantry, amour, armoured cavalry, airmobile troops, paratroops or mountain infantry. Which side they are is shown by which way they face.



Above the map is a message strip which is used to display game information – what turn it is, what the relative victory point score is, whose turn it is presently and what phase of the turn it is.

To the right of the map is a smaller, strategic map which shows the whole playing area, which runs from Denmark in the north to Switzerland in the south, and as far west as France. Small coloured dots on this map indicate where forces are located.

Below this strategic map is a display area. This shows what units are in the hex being currently inspected, their combat strengths, their type, supply level and units designation and nationality.

To move a unit, you place the cursor over it on the tactical map, hit the select button, then move it to wherever you want it. To attack, you use the cursor to select who will conduct the attack and which adjacent enemy unit they will attack.

Graphically it's superb. It's easily one of the best looking wargames I have ever seen.

Play is smooth and challenging, and I am certainly looking forward to sitting down to a long session with this one.

If PSS can repeat this, then I for one am going to be well chuffed ■

FACTS BOX

A magnificent simulation of a fascinating topic. Graphics are excellent and gameplay is challenging. Buy it

BATTLEFIELD GERMANY
Label: PSS
Author: In house
Price: £9.99
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★★★

The American firm Sharp's Inc, based in Mechanicsville, Virginia has released in the UK, via TK Computerware, four new strategy wargames. I have to admit that Sharps is not one of the American wargames publishers that I've come across before, but I'm glad I've had the chance to look at some of their products.

Three of the games are based on historical campaigns which took place during the Second World War. They are War in the East, which recreates Operation Barbarossa, the German attack on Russia in 1941; Ardennes, based on the last major German offensive of the war, in late 1944, and Fall of the Third Reich, which simulates the last few months of the Nazi empire and ends in the fall of Berlin. The other program, Britain Invaded, is based on the proposed German seaborne invasion of England.

All four games share certain elements and, judging by the name of the first program which loads in each case, War, I suspect they've all been written using the same basic authoring system. Because of this I'll explain the general game system first before looking at the individual programs.

All four are one-player wargames. All of the games use a square grid overlayed on the map – you can't actually see it, but it regulates movement and combat. Units have to be next to each other to attack, and move across the map square by square, using up their allotment of movement points for each turn. Diagonal movement, I'm afraid, you'll find is not allowed.

The exact type of unit differs from game to game, but falls into two basic categories, infantry or armour. The combat mechanism in each of the four games is the same. Units have to stop when they enter a square next to an enemy unit, and the player can then decide whether or not to engage in combat. Units vary in strength, but what you're trying to do is get as many strength points as you can attacking the same enemy formation. The more you outnumber the enemy by, the better the chance of destroying the target unit without loss to your own troops.

Combat can be affected by terrain – defenders in towns, woods, mountains, swamps or fortresses will be stronger. The computer calculates the odds and the plusses then generates a random number from one to six. Depending on a the final score, the attacker or defender of both might have to retreat, one or the other might be totally destroyed, or a unit from each side might be eliminated.

This underlying game system then, is fairly simplistic, but it plays remarkably well nonetheless.

The computer 'opponent' seems to be a reasonably tough challenge, although there is only the one level of difficulty.

My main complaint about the game system is that if a unit is next to an enemy unit, it can't move, so it's easy for your units in to be pinned down. One enemy formation could hold up three or four

ARDENNES

Subtitled **'The Battle of the Bulge'**, which doesn't mean that it's got anything to do with weight loss. Towards the end of 1944, the Allied armies in the West were pushing the German forces out of France and into Germany. The front had stabilised roughly where it had been during the phony war of 1940, before the Blitzkrieg overwhelmed Holland, Belgium and France. The Germans effectively tried to recreate the success that led to the Fall of France and the evacuation at Dunkirk, by driving through the Ardennes forest and cutting the Allied armies in two.

After initial success, the attack collapsed, largely due to almost total Allied control of the air.

Now you have the chance to



▲ The tanks attack

take command of the German force and see if you can succeed where Hitler's generals failed. At your command you have various formations, including infantry and armour. Against you is a similar force. You have to punch through the Allied armies and capture as many of the towns to the west of their lines as you can.

While such an idea should lead to a very fluid, mobile game, in this case it doesn't. Because of the combat system, one allied unit can easily hold down three or four if not more German formations. And the map is just too full of rough terrain for any real Blitzkrieg to develop.

Historically accurate, perhaps, but dull nonetheless.

It's helped by the fact that it's very difficult to tell the units apart. rather than give each type a letter designation, the author has chosen to identify them by number.

For some reason, it's far easier to remember that I means infantry brigade than that 4 does. I kept on thinking that the numbers referred to the actual strengths of the units concerned, which led to a number of mistakes■

FACTS BOX

Confusing – gets too bogged down in a crowded map. Historically accurate but dull wargame

ARDENNES
Label: TK Computerware
Author: Sharps Inc
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★☆☆☆



BRITAIN INVADED

Operation Sealion never took place, but both the German army, the Wehrmacht, and the German navy spent considerable time preparing plans for just how Britain should be invaded, although in fact the two disagreed fairly fundamentally over the best methods.

Those plans were never used, but there is an abiding fascination with the question of just what would have happened had the Germans tried.

A number of books have been written on the subject, and at least one board wargame (*Seelowe*, by SPI).

After initial German successes on land, the Royal Navy swept through the Channel and destroyed the German navy and transport vessels. The German invasion force was isolated and eventually surrendered. The general concensus of opinion among all parties concerned was that this is what would most probably have happened.

Britain Invaded sets certain premises before the game begins. Bothe the RAF and the Royal Navy have been effectively destroyed, so there is no opposition to the German landings in Britain. As a result, units have come ashore on a wide front, all the way along the South coast from Dorset to East Anglia. To resist them there are a few scattered British units on the coast, with more inland.

And unfortunately for the British commander, his units can't move until they're alerted: units are alerted either on a random chance or if a German unit attacks them.

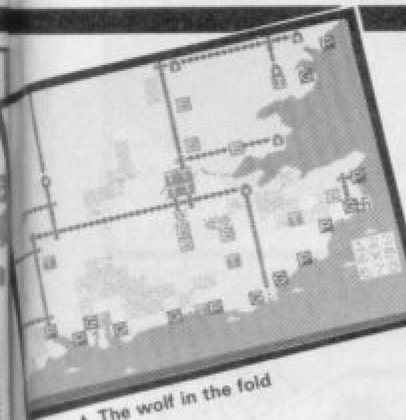
The map is large, stretching from the Bristol Channel to the North Sea, and up as far as the Midlands. It scrolls quite nicely, too. On it are marked cities, ports, forests and so on, and,

of your units in this way. Of course, the reverse is true, and you could try doing the same. I would have preferred some way of disengaging your troops, perhaps at the risk of losing some men. Tactically, though, this means that you have to keep some sort of reserve well back from the front line, ready to plug any gaps which appear.

Another point that annoyed me was the movement system. Like a lot of computer wargames, these four programs cycle through your units one by one: when a unit flashes, you can give it orders. Unfortunately, you have to move them in the same order every time: you can't skip over a unit and return to it later. This means that units can easily get trapped behind other units, and you can't move them where you wanted to.

You also have to be aware of the simplistic nature of the combat system. Often you will lose valuable units to an exchange, so make sure you get the best odds possible. Don't worry too much if one of your units gets bogged down in a slogging match with the enemy – a result where both sides have to retreat will effectively disengage for you.

Overall the four titles are not *great* games, but they would be worth having a go at if it weren't for the price which is quite frankly ludicrous – £9.95 is too much for what you get. They *are* better though than some recent wargames. What the Americans would call 'beer and pretzels games' – good for a few hours■



▲ The wolf in the fold

FACTS BOX

The best of the four TK wargames, with plenty of room to manouevre. Nice feel and a good map

BRITAIN INVADED
Label: TK Computerware
Author: Sharps Inc
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★☆☆

more importantly for the British player, railway lines.

The British have infantry divisions and armoured brigades, and the Germans have infantry divisions, armoured brigades and Panzer divisions. The German units move faster and are tougher in combat. To compensate slightly, the British player can move his units by rail, up to 10 squares – but they can't attack in the same turn. Plus, if a German units moves through a square with a railway line in it, the track is destroyed.

The Germans win either by controlling London or by getting hold of so many ports that they can flood units into the country. The British player has to try and destroy enemy units, contain the invasion and recapture ports.

When I played, I did really well in parts, and was launching a successful counterattack in Dorset and East Anglia. I recaptured three or four ports in about the same number of turns.

Unfortunately, the Nazi jackboot was rampaging through Kent and Sussex and London fell pretty quickly■



STRATEGY SIMULATION REVIEW

WAR IN THE EAST

War in the East recreates the initial stages of the struggle between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia (lets get cliched here guys).

It begins with Operation Barbarossa, and then moves into the assault on Moscow.

The player controls the Germans, and the computer runs the Russians. The German forces include infantry and Panzer divisions. When they take damage, they suffer step reduction and become brigade size units. Further damage destroys them. The Russians have weak infantry, tougher infantry and tough tank units.

Initially, the player should launch an all out attack against the Russian front line which will effectively dissolve. Then drive on Moscow, leaving any surviving Russian units to be mopped up by your rear echelon troops. Don't let your valuable Panzer divisions take too much damage.

In addition, keep an eye on the square at the bottom of the screen. This indicates how far the German supply lines stretch to the East. Move further East and your units are out of supply, which halves their combat strength and makes them sitting ducks.

The objective of the game is to capture and hold on to Moscow. I entered the Russian capital, but was driven out in the same turn, which apparently doesn't count. By the time I got close again, the Russian reinforcements had arrived and I faced a mass of Red Army units.

Not a bad game, though very simplistic. But when I loaded it in I had an awful feeling of deja vu, which I finally pinned down. **War in the East** looks and feels very similar to **Eastern Front,** written by the famous programmer Chris Crawford five or six years ago for the first Atari micros. Even now it beats War in the East hollow■

FACTS BOX

OK, but nothing more than a straight slog. The scenario has rather been done to death elsewhere too. Expensive

WAR IN THE EAST
Label: TK Computerware
Author: Sharps Inc
Price: £9.95
Memory; 48K/128K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★★★☆☆

FALL OF THE THIRD REICH

There's not a great deal that can be said about this one. It is a simulation of the final collapse of Hitler's Thousand Year Reich.

The player controls the German forces and has to dry to delay the inevitable end for as long as possible.

The map, which is one screen large, shows Germany and some of the surrounding countries, with various terrain features – cities, mountains, fortifications etc marked on.

The allies, controlled by the computer, outnumber the German units considerably, and the only real option open to the player is to use the peculiarities of the game system to bog the enemy down for as long as possible. There is no scope for any sort of grand strategy or any tactical finesse, it's just sheer bloody slog.

The Allies win the game by capturing Berlin. The Germans don't win the game, so all you can do is lose, later.

Unless the accident of fortune isolates an allied unit so that you can attack it with as little risk as possible, you would be well advised not to do any attacking at all, which makes for rather a boring game, especially since most of the time you won't be able to move any units because they'll be pinned down by the enemy.

FACTS BOX

Not really worth it. A boring, repetitive slog. Especially since it turns out it's a wargame you can't win!

FALL OF THE THIRD REICH
Label: TK Computerware
Author: Sharps Inc
Price: £9.95
Memory: 48K/128K

Reviewer: Gary Rook

★☆☆☆☆

SPECIAL OFFER SINCLAIR user

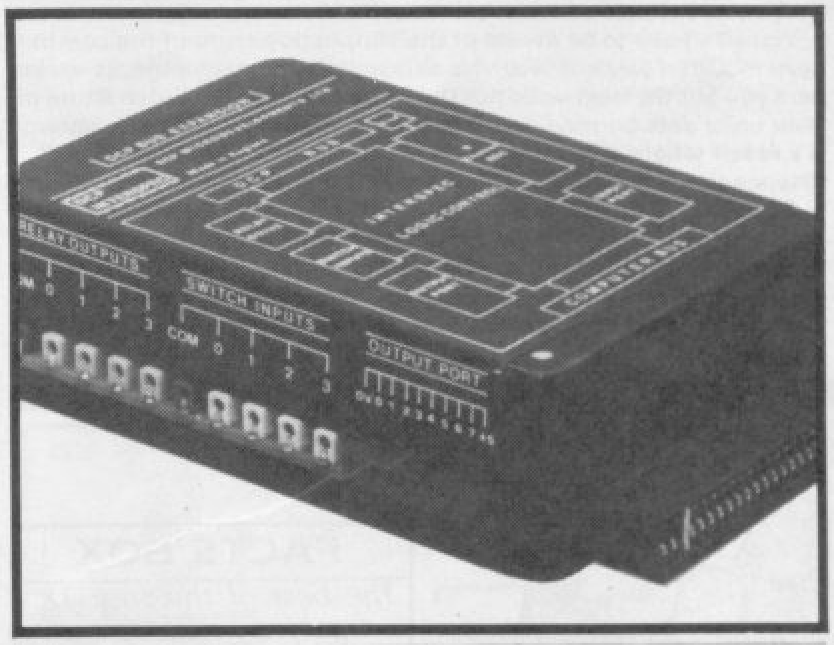
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SURGERY

Sinclair Surgery

Spectrum on the blink? Rupert Goodwins has a cure

Oh Brother!

I have recently acquired a Brother HR 5C Printer which I was assured was compatible with my Spectrum 128. Can you tell me how to drive it through a ZX Interface 1? I can't seem to get it going at all.

I have already bought an adaptor lead for the RS232 port for the printer. Does this mean that they aren't compatible?

WKS Greenwood
Thornaby
Cleveland

● *The HR 5 does work well with the Spectrum. The HR 5C is a version with a few special Commodore characters in it, but should work just as well with the Spectrum. To send text to the printer from Interface One, use these commands:*

10 ***Format*** *"b", 1200*
20 ***Open*** *#3, "b"*
30 ***Lprint*** *"whatever you want"*

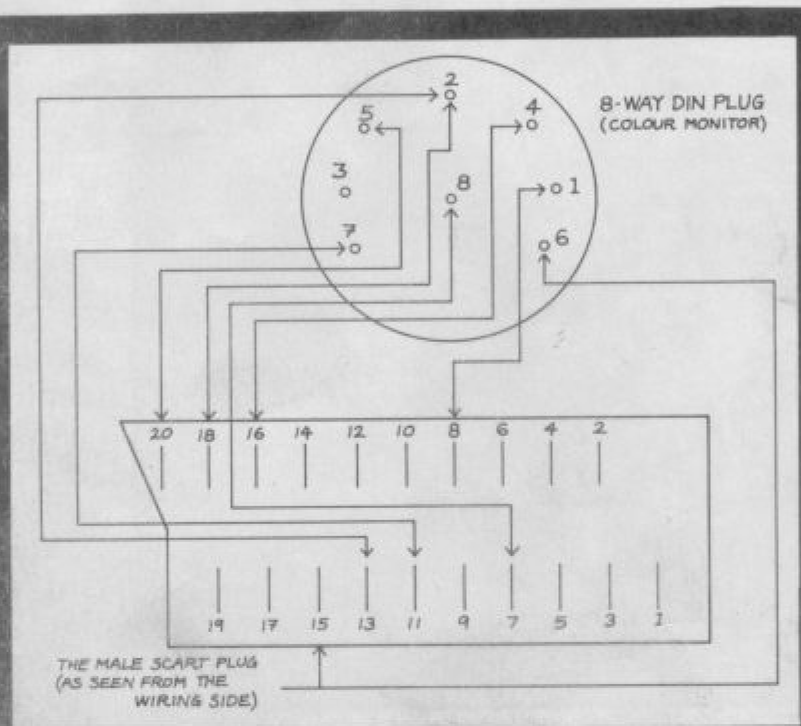
In line 10, replace the 1200 with whatever baud rate your printer is set to; if you don't know have a look at the printer manual. If you want to use ***Llist*** *to list a program to the printer instead of* ***Lprint****ing stuff, then replace the "b" in lines 10 and 20 with "t"*

What a Din

I have just bought a second-hand Spectrum 48K and a Tandy cassette recorder, but I bought them separately. The cassette recorder only has a five-way Din socket, and the cassette leads I got with the Spectrum won't fit. Can I buy a proper lead from anywhere?

Maurice Prior
Glasgow

● *Nobody that I know of sells a suitable lead, but Tandy do sell a large range of adaptors for cassette recorders. Including, I believe, a 5 pin Din plug to four 3.5 mm sockets which you existing leads will plug into. You'll have to experiement to find out which two are* ***Load*** *and* ***Save*** *signals.* ***Load*** *is easy, just type* ***Load*** *" ", and play any cassette (even music). When the border starts to change colour, you'll have found the* ***Load*** *line.* ***Save*** *is more difficult, you'll have to record some data (try* ***Save Code*** *0,16384) on each lead, and listen to the resulting tape. There's a chance that the signals from the* ***Din*** *socket won't be suitable for the Spectrum, so you might like to try and get hold of a more recent cassette player with the right* ***Mic*** *and* ***Ear*** *sockets. It would certainly be easier*

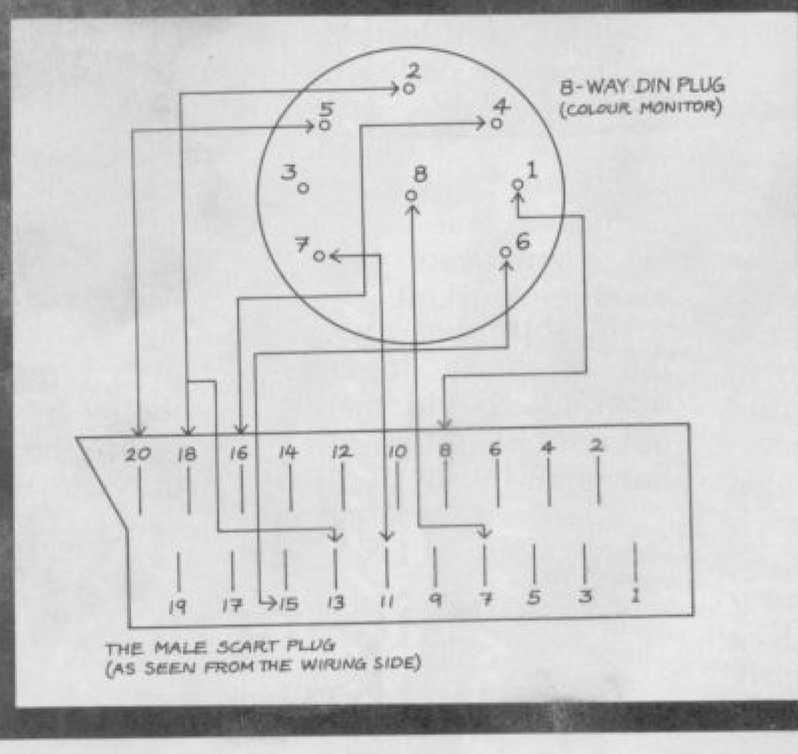


Getting Scarted

I have a Grundig P40-125 monitor TV and a QL. The Grundig has a din socket and a Scart socket. Through which should the QL be connected and which pins should be linked?

Edmund Berry
Finglas West
Dublin

● *Your best bet is the Scart socket. This is a European standard and is getting very popular, so if you should ever get a different TV/monitor you will be able to use the old lead with no modifications (so the theory goes). To make up a QL-Scart lead you'll need an 8 way Din plug (for the QL), a male Scart plug (also known as a Peritel plug), and a length of 8 core cable, which doesn't need to be shielded. Soldering dins and things is a fiddly job, and it's easy to get your fingers burnt, so you might relegate the job to your friendly neighbourhood TV repair shop. The wiring diagram is as above and below.*



Bounce back

I have a rubber keyboard Spectrum 48k, and the keyboard is playing up. The B.N. and M keys only work with *Symbol Shift*, giving me '*' '.' and, with symbol shifted extended mode, *Bright, Over* and *Inverse.*
What's wrong?

Steven Woodward
Harpenden
Herts

● *For starters, it's probably not your keyboard itself. The fact that the keys only work when another key is pressed makes me think that it's the keyboard resistors that are at fault, but it could also be the ULA (unlikely), the keyboard diodes (very unlikely), or a crack on the printed circuit board (stranger things have happened). Unless you're happy about poking about in your Spectrum with a soldering iron, I'd take it along to a TV repair shop. As there's just been a six-part series about fixing Spectrums in the TV repair shop trade magazine (I kid you not!), they should be able to help*

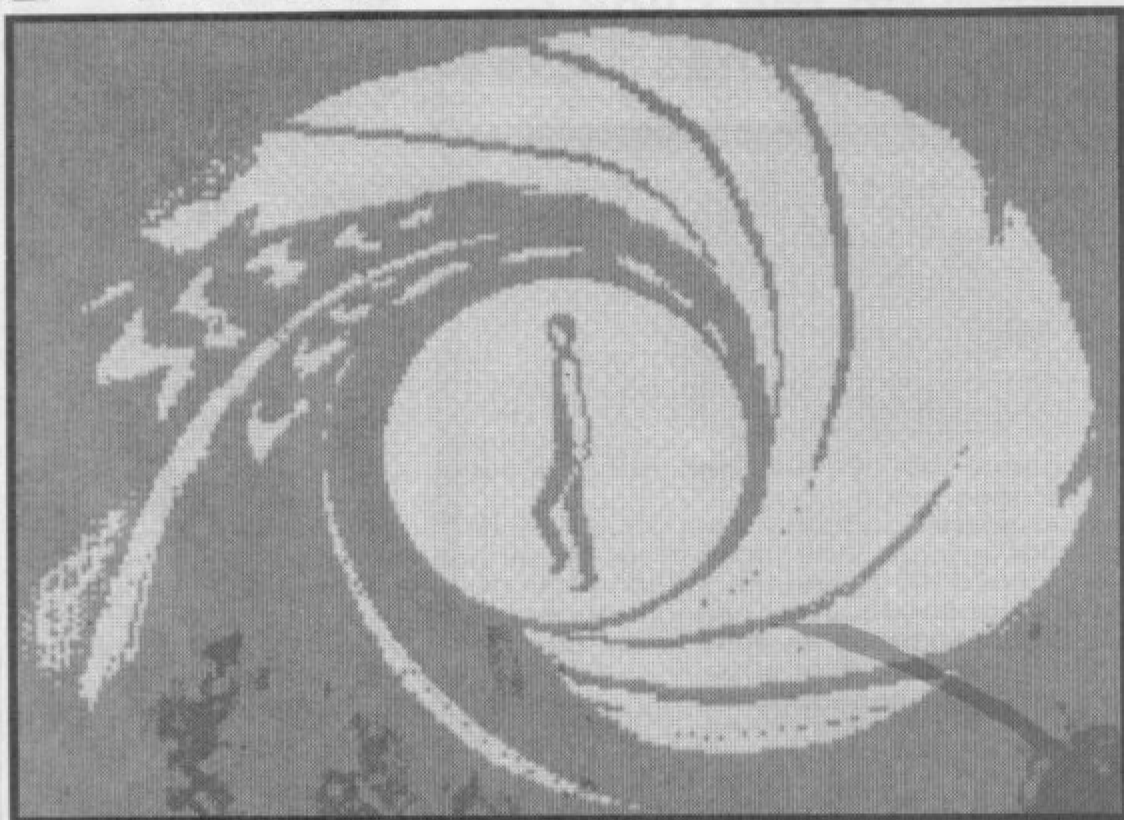
Socket to me

I own the Specdrum, the Cheetah *Midi* interface and the Datel sound sampler. Is it possible to connect them all together at once on a 48K Spectrum, but then only run one at a time? I'm sure the constant unplugging and plugging can't be any good for them or my Spectrum!

Costas Cacoyiannis
Limassol
Cyprus

● *The only way to have things plugged in permanently but not active is via a bus multiplexer, a horrendous piece of electronics that nobody has ever built for the Spectrum. I think that it would be worth your while to have a look at the Ram Electronics Music Machine, which does everything your three bits do, but in one package.*

NEXT MONTH



SU stirring but not shaken

Farringdon tube looked safe but something was wrong.

David Dangerous dived left, spinning on his heels and neatly twisting an arch through the air. He landed on his feet. A knife flashed through the air zinging into the wall where he had stood, "An assassin with a knife is no match for the old Torvill and Dean manoeuvre", he thought wryly.

David was hot on the trail of T.I.N.K.L.E. an organisation so secret nobody knew what the letters stood for. It was going to be tough but no kitchen was too hot for David. He had been in frying pans before and would run into the fire if necessary.

T.I.N.K.L.E. planned to turn the entire population into mindless zombies by impregnating the pages of the nations computer magazines with 'tedium K' a powerful boredom drug. If only David could make it back to base... an antidote might be prepared.

Dodging left a hail of bullets spat past David's right shoulder. Pausing only to take a nibble of his wholefood sandwich, he ran on up the road zagging to avoid the gunfire from a helicopter gunship hovering overhead.

The door at last! He punched in the secret code number in to the key pad – a number so secret most of the members of staff didn't know what it was. But David was licenced to Edit. He even knew how the Fax machine worked.

He stumbled upstairs, Linda the secretary looked up unblinking. David tossed his Elk hat nonchalantly onto a passing hat stand." T. will see you now," she said.

T. was so high up the organisation he knew the keypad number, how to work the Fax, the location of the secret photocopiers and the names of all the players in the English football squad in 1965.

David told T. about Tedium K.

T. wrote the details down and produced a very full memorandum on the subject. An antidote had to be prepared immediately.

Working through the night a crack team assembled the vital ingredients. Top researchers took the best Sinclair computer magazine there was and impregnated its pages with powerful ingredients – thrill factors capable of preventing mindless zombiedom.

Factors in the big thrill included an awesome, astonishing totally unique 'game in a mag' – a challenge of almost mythical proportions within the very pages themselves. (To say more would invite the usual rip offs). There would be not only the usual definitive and speedy reviews of new software but the promise of something extra special for 128K owners... There'll be another incredible full-colour poster. And a cartoon that can only be described as different. . .

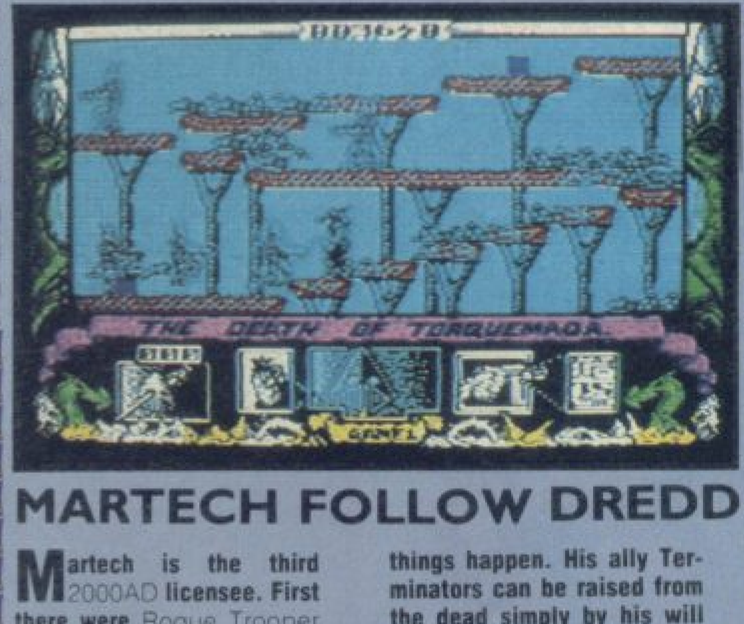
David Dangerous saw the first magazine come off the production line, he lit a Norman and Fowlers No 7 special blend no-filter cigarette and smiled. Then he coughed and wheezed a bit.

"God, these things are bloody horrible" he thought.

He read the title of the magazine. It was Sinclair User May Edition■

SINCLAIR USER:
Licenced to thrill
On the street April 18.

PREVIEW



MARTECH FOLLOW DREDD

Martech is the third 2000AD licensee. First there were Rogue Trooper and Judge Dredd. Now Nemisis The Warlock blasts on to the screen.

Scheduled for a spring release, Nemisis is the strangest hero to inhabit the pages of the comic. He's the leader of an underground resistance organisation devoted to freeing the land of Termight from the grip of the dark Lord Torquemada.

Torquemada's desire is to kill off all aliens, thus 'cleansing' the galaxy, making it fit for humans to inhabit. Nemisis and his band are the last remaining hope.

Nemisis TW is presented in side-on fashion and the screens flip once you reach the edge. The panel at the bottom indicates numerous stats relevant to your well-being. In the bottom left-hand corner of the screen your score is shown. On the far right a panel indicates how many rounds are remaining in your gun. Moving left the screen here shows a gradually solidifying image of Torquemada. This gives you an indication of how close you are to him, helping to locate him in the maze of rooms.

The remaining panels tell you how much pressure T is putting on your heart and the strength of his influence. Being a rather spooky individual, Torquemada can make some very peculiar things happen. His ally Terminators can be raised from the dead simply by his will and turned into zombies, equally intent on your demise.

Nemisis The Warlock is being programmed by Catalyst Coders, who worked on Tarzan. As a result, it is graphically very impressive. The shooting and sword-fighting routines are looking superb, there are even whizz lines on the screen when you

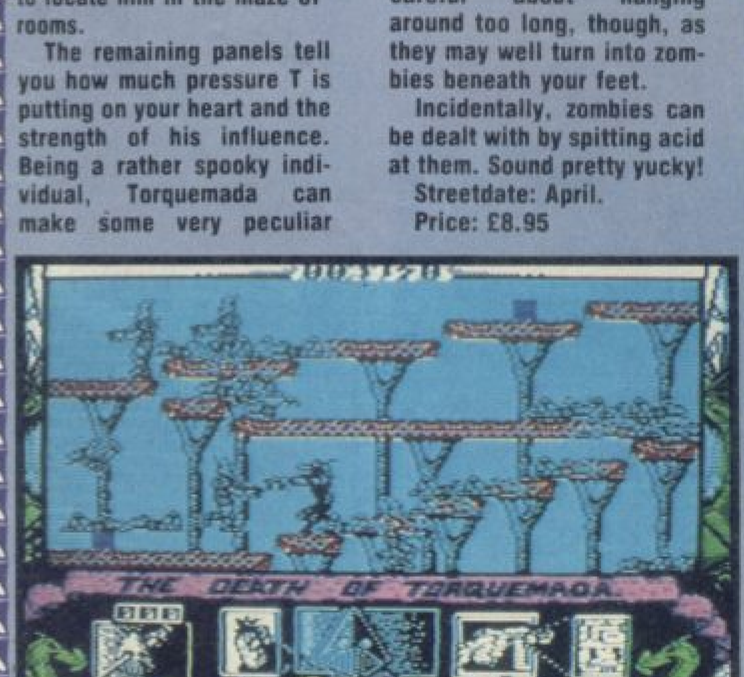


wield the sword.

The game retains some of the unpleasantness of the comic strip in the way that the corpses of the Terminators build up, cluttering the screens. Even more sickly is the way you can actually climb up the bodies, accessing different parts of the screen. You'll have to be careful about hanging around too long, though, as they may well turn into zombies beneath your feet.

Incidentally, zombies can be dealt with by spitting acid at them. Sound pretty yucky!

Streetdate: April.
Price: £8.95



EDGE GETS D&D TWIST



By rights, Warlock from The Edge should be absolutely fantastic. Firstly, it's the follow up to Shadow Skimmer and as such should maintain standards technically. Secondly, it's programmed using the technology and programming methods of the Fairlight games and so has already been tried and tested to a certain extent.

Warlock has a markedly differing plot from Shadow Skimmer. It's set in the time of wizards and witches and spells and cauldrons and windy nights etc.

In the game, you'll get to control a group of characters in your quest to reach and destroy the White Wizard and thus gain control of the domain and retire to a life of luxury.

Of the three characters you control, the Warlock is the most magically potent but also the most physically weak. Then there is the Goblin and the troll to choose between. Instead of simply pushing a button and turning into one of the characters, you'll have to find and drink a magic potion. The secret will be to store up your potions and use them at the appropriate times.

The gameplay sounds a little like Gauntlet in fact, involving lots of fast action and spell casting and blasting. The most exciting part is that instead of having a decidedly strategic feel (like Fairlight) it all takes place at an arcade-style speed and involves frantic battles and suchlike. Everything happens in castles and caves and dungeons and the whole thing looks completely great.

Streetdate: April/May.
Price: £7.95

GIVVA DOGGA BONE



Paddywack, shortly to be released on the Activision label, originates from the rather nice people at the RamJam Corporation.

It's all pretty simple, but has some very cute graphics and some odd humour throughout.

Paddywack involves two dogs and their search to do more and more doggy things – hence the title. Both dogs are helplessly in love with Fifi, a poodle, and are determined to win her affection, each trying to prove himself top dog (Oh *dear* – Ed).

Anyway, the game consists of various sub-plots, each of which look rather good. On one screen each player must endeavour to catch a cat before it crosses the screen. On another, a postman must be harassed to an appropriate degree. Then there is the "bin screen" which involves scavenging useful things from dustbins. You get the general idea.

Looks as though a ropey idea has maybe been turned into a completely fabby game by the graphics and inventive touches. We shall see.

Streetdate: unknown as yet.
Price: unknown as yet

PREVIEW

BASE OVER TIP AFTER BATMAN

Head Over Heels comes from Ocean and, more exciting, it's the direct follow-up to Batman, and is all about foot and mouth. Jon Ritman's games have always been worth a look (Match Day, 3D Battle Zone clone, Bear Bovver) but the plot for this one is a bit wierd. The storyline is set around a group of planets that are currently languishing under the tyrannical rule of Blacktooth. You take the roles of two oppressed beings, the foot and the mouth, and you must escape the empire of Blacktooth.

Obviously, as it's pretty uncool simply to worry about yourself in such situations, liberating the other planets from Blacktooth's evil grip would be deemed a dashed public-spirited thing to do.

Foot and Mouth each have different capabilities: Foot can jump and Mouth can 'fire' (urgh). As a result, each character is best suited to different areas of the 300 screen playing area.



And, to add spice to the gameplay, during parts of the game you will be able to join up the Foot and Mouth to form an indestructible killing machine, or something like that.

It's a 3D square-room romp in the style of so many that have gone before. Ocean claims that it will be 'better than Batman'. More next month.

Streetdate: March.
Price: £7.95

RAMJAM GETS BIZMILLER..

RamJam is looking better than ever with its new game Bizmiller. It's all set on a space ship of the future and it looks simply dandy. (Is that a useless joke – Ed).

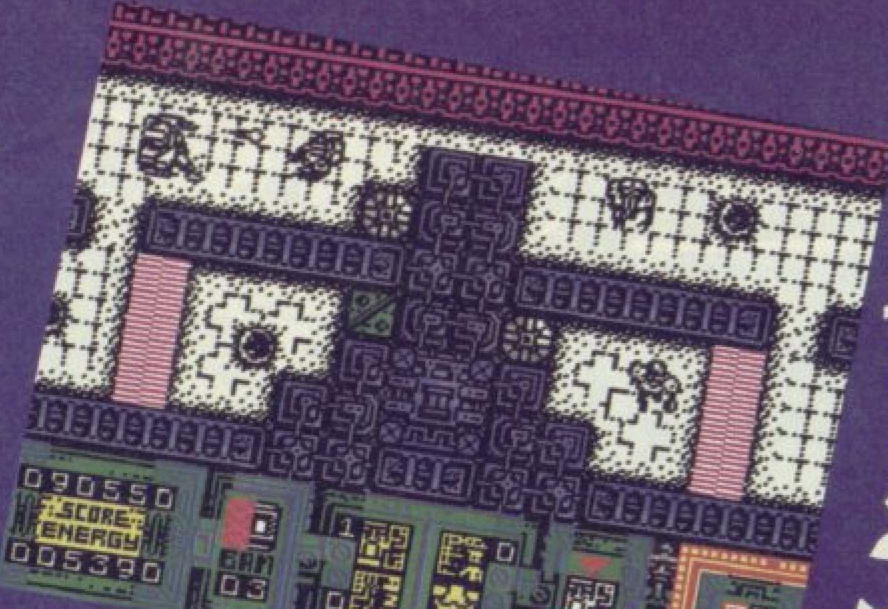
The plot centres around the enormous spaceship (which occupies 256 screens so far). While flying through previously uncharted zones, the hull becomes a stop-over for some highly undesirable hitch-hikers. Unknown and unnamed, these beserk creatures begin eating away at the ship, wrecking everything in sight, working their way in.

Something has got to be done, and it's up to you to do it. Somehow you've get to get rid of the critters that are currently gnawing away the vital protective casing of the ship.

Thankfully, you're not alone. Around the ship are manufacturing stations, each capable of producing a robot that you can control. Some of the robots can be controlled to attack and destroy the parasites, while others can be directed to simply repair the hull. Of course, things are never as simple as they seem, and a lot of running about and fetching and carrying has to occur before you can get the robots to function.

Everything is viewed from above with the aliens seen coming up through the floor of the ship and the action looks fast and professional. The ship is divided into various sections, each with its own set of obstacles to negotiate and avoid. Also around the perimeter of the screens is a railway-style track that allows greater speed while travelling long distances. Quite who is marketing the game is still to be decided. Obviously, we'll keep you posted.

Streetdate: none yet
Price: no details





ROYAL ROMP AFTER TRAP

Charlie, Di and the Queen Mum are all key characters in Flunky, Don – Trap Door – Priestley's latest big-spirited romp for Piranha.

It's your chance to walk the corridors of Buck Palace but, in Flunky, you do it as general toady to ER and family.

First, you apply for the job and are given menial tasks by the head of the household – rumblings of Trap Door here, methinks. Light the fires, turn on the lamps and fetch the Royal corgis for HRH. It's all go and, if you make a slip up you'll be told to naff orff.

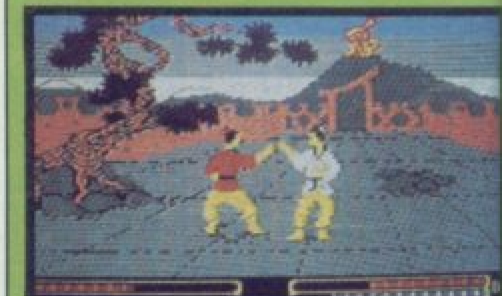
Keep your autograph book handy, as part of your reward are the monickers of the Right Royal figures. Tread the red-rugged corridors with care, though. It's an old house and there are plenty of ghosts lurking in the shadows.

The game's larger than Trap Door, but the multi-coloured sprite graphics are the same.

Don has also thought up some highly bizarre problems for Flunky to solve and most of them have wickedly unusual solutions. That's what he says, anyway.

Streetdate: May.
Price: £9.95

HERE'S SAM IN URAI







HAIRY DEAL OVER THE EDGE



One of the most promising licence-deals for ages and ages is Garfield which has been snapped up by The Edge.

Garfield is the fat orange-and-black cat found on tea towels and posters and T-shirts and postcards and walls. And he's remarkably cynical and unpleasant in an appealing sort of way.

Garfield the computer game is currently being programmed by ex-Virgin programmer Charles Goodwin who, we are told, has managed to get the actual program mechanics down to 10K, leaving all the rest of the memory for splendid graphics. Big characters and super-smooth animation are promised. Something The Edge knows something about.

If it follows the technical brilliance of Shadow Skimmer, Garfield could well be one of the few licence-deal games worth considering.

Garfield – The Big Fat Hairy Deal should be appearing around Easter time. It's been under development for seven months already and is the first of a planned series of games based on the nasty-but-lovable cat.

Streetdate: March/April.
Price: £7.95

SPLIT SCREEN VECTOR DOGFIGHT

Oh dear. It's the 22nd Century again. Starlight Software, the people who brought you Greyfell have gone for a space scenario for their follow-up title, Dogfight 2187.

A hole has been torn in space, and various undesirables are using it as a kind of back door through which they can enter our universe.

You play a kind of immigration officer called Rhett Dexter (*Gone With The Wind* – how did Gable get in this?) whose job it is to deal with the illegal immigrants. Now, somewhere lying around the outskirts of the universe are the equivalent of pieces of spacial elastoplast. By collecting these pieces and assembling them, it's possible to seal up the hole and thus stop the flow of aliens. Sounds a far from sound scenario to me, but, there you go.

Dogfight is a 3D combat program that can be played in split-screen mode by two players, either against the computer or against each other.

Sounds a little like a cross between Melbourne House's 'cult' (unsuccessful) game Starion or like Star Glider from Rainbird crossed with some Top Gun elements like the two-window simultaneous-play gimmick.

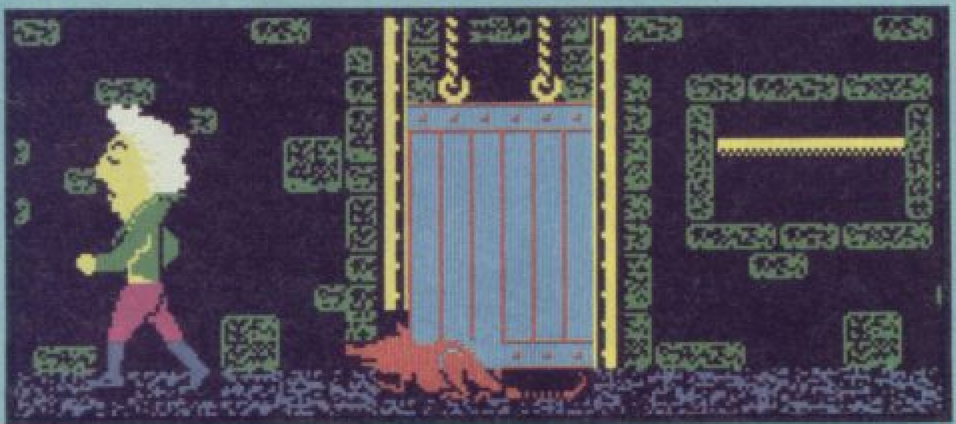
Streetdate: soon (remember, Francis Lee, when he was at



Beyond, was the chap that tried to bring us Dark Sceptre and Star Trek).

Streetdate: none yet
Price: to be announced





ALPHA LIKE CILLA

Throughout history, many people have changed their names to improve their image. Even true megastars have decided their true titles weren't quite right. Cilla Black, to cite a typical example of a megastar, was originally called something completely different. And Whoosh! immediately after the change she found herself rocketted to superstardom.



The same pattern of events will obviously be followed by Alpha Omega who has now changed their name to the very exciting Power House. The firm's got itself a new logo and have its some really splendid artwork for the game boxes. And has selling the stuff for a paltry £1.99. Some of the games have a bonus program on Side 2, while others have some music on the flip side.

"Yowzer! Why pay more?" asks the advertising copy, "Hey Blimbo, Mega Mega! This stuff is brilltoid. Collect the set." Uh-huh. That's what it says. The conclusion is that Power House is at least two cans short of thier six-pack (its got a kangaroo loose in its top paddock, its elevator doesn't go all the way to the top etc etc).

And what of the games? Well, I'm sure they will sell very well...

Streetdate: March.

Price: £1.99 each



There's not a lot to beat the resounding crack of a bamboo pole against the side of a face-guard. Gremlin's Samurai Trilogy involves a good deal of this kind of thing.

Gremlin seems to have developed an oriental leaning – after its Way of the Tiger series.

Samurai Trilogy is set, unsurprisingly, in the mystic East, it's another program about having to learn the matial arts from a doddery old fool who has been around for centuries and insists on sleeping on the floor and talking like a fortune cookie.

In the Nang River area of the orient live a cooky bunch of bruisers who get their kicks by sitting in the Temple of Chopemup (Gremlin's joke, not mine) and studying the three martial arts of Kendo, Karate and Samurai.

Yup, the game is in three parts, but all in one *Load*.

Having won a place among their number, your task is to attain the title Samurai War Lord. You set about this by combatting various opponents with different weapons. Kendo involves the bamboo poles and face masks, Samurai is all about swordsmanship and we've all seen Karate a hundred times over.

As you progress through the ranks, your sparring partners will become more and more tough. If this proves a problem you can branch off for practice in other strength-building exercises such as breaking bricks or slates. These activities will allow you to take on ever-more ferrocious opponents and thus earn more points.

Nice graphics.

Streetdate: March.

Price: £9.99

IT'S A HEAD CASE

Let us venture into a world that is still uncharted, still exciting and certinly not fully understood.

A world where anything is possibe and nothing is real. Let us take a brief journey into... the human mind.

No, seriously, this is very strange. A computer game controlled by your brain waves. Sounds impossible, but it's true!

I was wheeled round to RamJam to try it out. Despite all assurances from the gleeful entourage, it was impossible to feel completely at ease as conductant was put on electrodes and the peculiar contraption wired to the little black box was taped to my head.

RamJam - responsible for Terrors of Trantoss, Explorer and Dandy is carrying out all kinds of experiments in its dark laboratories, wiring people up to computers.

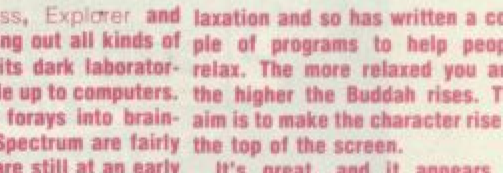
Currently, its forays into brain-tapping on the Spectrum are fairly simple. Things are still at an early stage. Ram Jam has managed to tie down certain frequencies of mental activity to certain feelings and emotions. Stress and happiness would appear at different points on the scale, for example.

Anyway, its worked out what frequently covers stress and relaxation and so has written a co ple of programs to help peop relax. The more relaxed you ar the higher the Buddah rises. T aim is to make the character rise the top of the screen.

It's great, and it appears really work. It's going to take so time before the electronics can produced at a convenient size a price, but things are certainly loo ing good.

Streetdate: well in the future would rekon.

Price: no details yet



▲ Unwilling RamJam victim gets wired up (please don't try th at home ... yawn)

B-MOVIE TITLE

Oh dear. It always happens around this time of year. It must be something to do with the weather or something, but people do come out with the most peculiar ideas.

It's the same old story. Gruff voices on the end of distant phone lines, suspicious meetings in dingy Soho eateries, attempted bribery and the hard hard sell.

This time the people with the idea to "undermine the state of the computer industry" are calling themselves Wild Fire (hem hem) and their scheme goes like this:

Small ad placed in classified sections of various mags. For a reasonably small outlay (£5, we are led to believe) the punter will receive a tape containing the game and a set of cassette labels. On the B side of the tape is a duplicating program. The punter is allowed to duplicate and sell copies for however much they want, providing they send a certain amount of money back to Wild Fire for each copy they sell.

Can you see the obvious flaw in this concept?

Anyway, the first game bears the suitably odd title, *The Astonishing Adventures of Mr Weames and the Sex Vampires.* Wild Fire is obviously trying very hard to make its program entirely uninviting. Pity really, as it looks quite good.

Mr Weames, a missionary, is doing his best to bring The Good Word to the nether regions of the world. During a particularly far-reaching expedition, he comes upon the den of the afforementioned vampires, and all kinds of perilous adventures ensue.

As you may imagine, a good deal of coffin-staking is involved, along with some pleasing graphics and a desperately improbably marketing concept too.

Watch the small ads.

Streetdate: very soon.

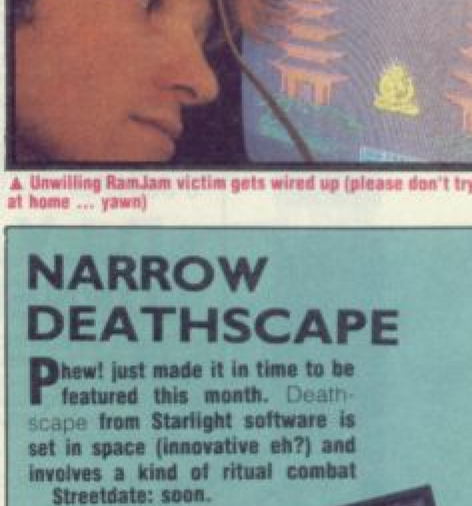
Price: undecided

NARROW DEATHSCAPE

Phew! just made it in time to be featured this month. Deathscape from Starlight software is set in space (innovative eh?) and involves a kind of ritual combat

Streetdate: soon.

Price: no details



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PREVIEW

CRL'S PUBLISHING PIG

Oink! is probably one of the few journals to be read cover to cover in the SU offices. Along with the *Viz* (through Virgin record stores, 60p monthly, check it out) it's very very silly indeed and is a much sought after object.

Realising the potential and appeal of a *semi*-parody comic, CRL of tasteful photo-montage fame (see *Gremlin* Feb 87) – has set about inventing a game based upon the comic which is entirely constructed around pigs.

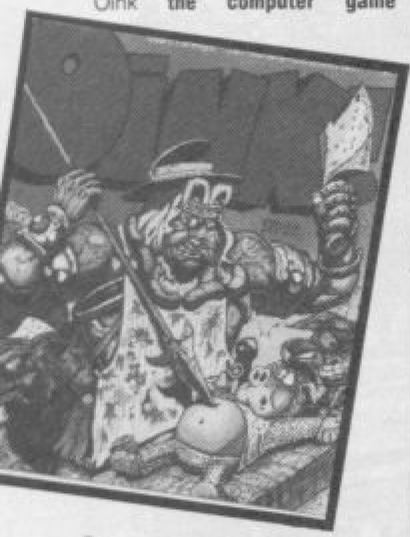
Oink the computer game attempts to maintain the feel of the comic. It's being produced with the co-operation of the *Oink* team who are producing all the artwork for packaging and the ads that you will see all over the computer mags in the next few months.

And Oink is being programmed by John Williams a newcomer to the Spectrum. The basic idea is this: you play the Editor of *Oink*. It's nearly time to go to press and there are pages of the magazine unfilled. By going into the subparts of the game you can fill the pages in time and thus avoid a major disaster (if only it was that easy – Ed).

In each sub-game you take the role of a different character in the comic. One part features you as Rubbish Man, flying over the ground picking up rubbish and avoiding bad guys. Another part of the game features a Breakout – style screen.

More details as and when. Watch this space.

Streetdate: May.
Price: £7.95



MAD MONTY MIX-UP!

Ooops! Here's the screenshot of Auf Wiedersehen Monty **that for reasons entirely beyond our control (ie we went a bit mad) could be seen on the** Into The Eagles' Nest **review last month. Apologies to Pandora and Gremlin. The individual responsible has been made to watch a whole program of *Surprise Surprise*.**

Price: £7.99.
Streetdate: March



GADGETS SCROLLING

Here's a look at the rapidly approaching Inspector Gadget **from Melbourne House. Based – as if you didn't know – on the cartoon series, it has you – Inspector Gadget – doing all kinds of zany fun-filled things**

Five 'worlds' (ie zones) are included and you'll have to learn how to use your gadgets in order to survive. Available for use are: Springy Legs! Gadgetty Hammer! Gadgetty Skates! A Gadget Copter! A Coat That Inflates! A Watch! OOer!

More info next ish.
Streetdate: April.
Price: £7.95





LIKE, GANGSTER CITY

OK youse guys, shaddup and listen up. Dis here is da new thing from Activision, see?

It's an adventure called *Chicago* and is all about people like you an' me – honest businessmen with respect for each other, y'know?

You gotta take da name of Rats Moldano (probably to avoid any, uh, associates that might bother you) and must return to your old dives after a brief period, er, 'away'.

Looks as though things might have changed a little in da neighbourhood. Chances are a new gang may have muscled its way in on the action of your Speakeasies and other entertainment establishments, if you get my meaning.

Obviously, you'll need a good buddy to rely on. Someone who ya know you can trust to watch ya back when the bullets start to fly. I recommend Louigi. He's been with da family for a coupla years now, and is a good boy. Of course, if Louigi buys it, you're on your own. And that ain't a good way to be in a city like this.

Still, the place still looks the same, as you can see. It's got all the dingy alleys and things that you're used to.

There are about 80 locations that you'll have to keep tabs on. It'll be a tough fight to regain control of the area. After all, you've been away for a while, and da sleazoids now in charge may have got a firm grip. Still. We think we can rely on you to do right by the family.

You can do things similar to the other RamJam (the guys who dun it) games. Most of the people you find walking around can be grilled for info and wasted if they know too much.

You can do all the complex moves too, like going somewhere and getting the gun, loading it and using it in on move. Slick stuff.

It's a split-screen adventure with brief text descriptions and full sentence input. The graphics are all kind of dark, moody scenes and it all looks very nice.

Streetdate: no dates.
Price: undecided

IT'S THE REAL THING?

Yeh. Basketball. Right. It's cool, it's fast, it's a game for tall people. If the only thing you've got going for you is your height, you could still be a big star.

If, on the other hand you're not particularly tall, basketball isn't really worth considering as a professional career, so you may as well go off and become a milkman instead.

That used to be the story. Now Activision has done something about it. It offers you the chance to become a star in a computerised version of the sport.

Championship Basketball features all the usual things and a few more besides. Check 'em out:

- **Two player option!**
- **One player option!!**
- **Practice sessions!!!**
- **League competition!!!!**

Basketball **also boasts the best graphics in a basketball simulation as well as 'on court action that feels like the real thing'. Well I never.**

Streetdate: March.
Price: £7.99

CHOPPER (OOER!)

Couple of up-and-coming programs shortly to appear from the US simulation giants, Microprose. After finally deciding that the Spectrum sales will make enough money, they have set their programmers the task of converting across from the C64.

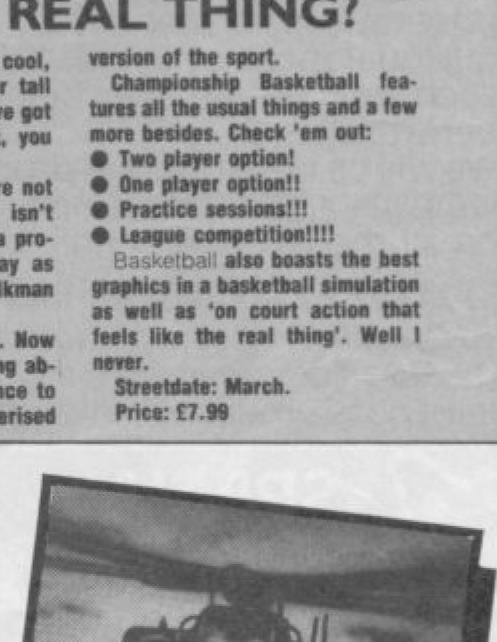
Gunship **is one of the more exciting released planned, in which you take charge of a large helicopter and skim over dangerous terrain on numerous hair-raising missions, blowing away hostile elements in political trouble-spots all over the world. (Well it is an American program, so what can you expect).**

It's a combination of most of the good elements you'd expect to find in this kind of program. There's the three-dimensional flight sim and all the strategy and mapping stuff and there are lots of missions that you'll have to complete successfully in order to be awarded the absolutely vital medal of honour.

There is also the tremendous 'kitting out' bit where you select the various armaments, hopefully picking the ones which will prove most efficient in your mission.

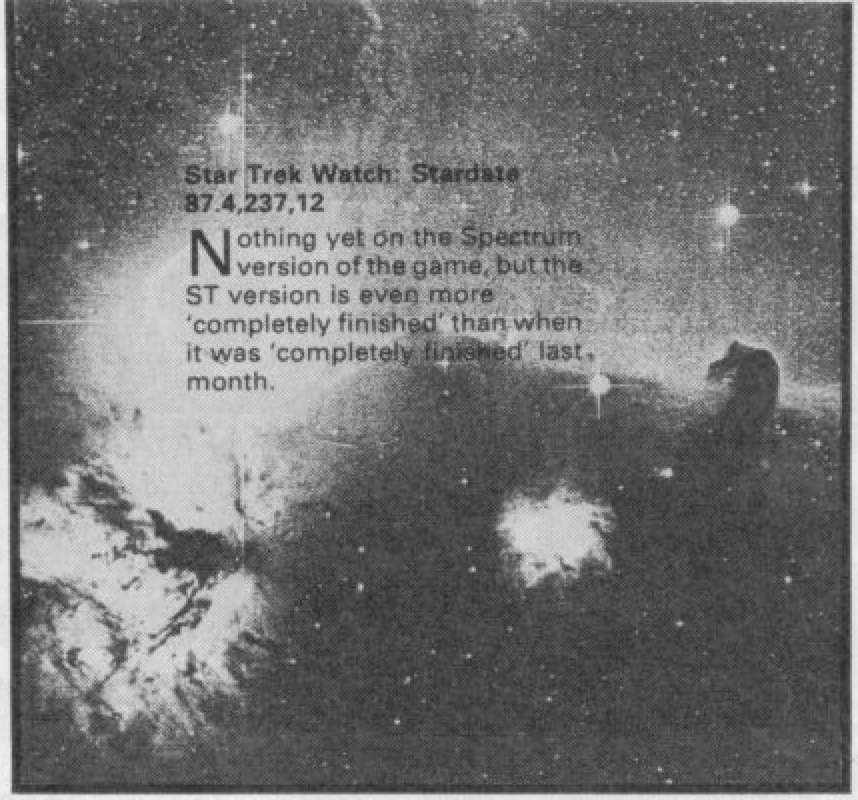
Also in the pipeline is Kennedy Approach **which isn't particularly interesting unless you're seriously into air-traffic control. You've got to take control of Kennedy Airport and ensure that no planes crash into the control tower or something.**

Streetdate: Soon.
Price: £9.95



Bruce Everiss, who *Gremlin* considers the conscience of our industry, is back. The crusader for the rights of hetrosexuals has returned under the guise of Abbot Computer Products. Managing Director Brucie is selling Amstrad PC1512s but has come up with a unique selling angle. If you hand over your Spectrum to Brucie he will give you £50 off the official price of the PC 1512. In fact if you buy one of the big expensive PC 1512s with disc drives he will five you £100 off. Isn't he generous?

Why is he doing this? Gremlin doesn't know but wonders whether it is just a ploy by Everiss to corner the market in used Spectrums so that next time he is responsible for the release for some terrific game or other he can say "I know for a fact the game has been played on thousands of machines, so I can't understand why it isn't in the charts". Watch out for people offering "reconditione Spectrums only 500 keypresses on the clock"

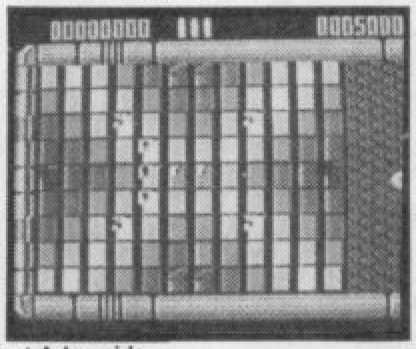


Star Trek Watch: Stardate 87.4,237,12

Nothing yet on the Spectrum version of the game, but the ST version is even more 'completely finished' than when it was 'completely finished' last month.

Ooer, Isn't life mysterious? *Gremlin* has decided that there is an all powerful being ruling our destiny after all. Those who don't believe in miracles would do well to take a quick glance over the software industry. That'd soon give those unbelievers something to think about.

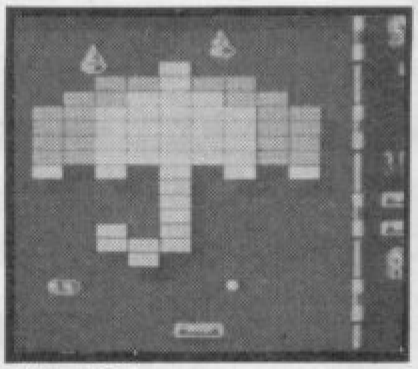
Gremlin can just about believe that four software houses could simultaneously release almost the same game, **Gauntlet,** within weeks of each other (**Druid, Dandy, Avenger** and the official version) and think it was pure accident. Gremlin is a trusting, somewhat naive soul. But guess what? What? No sooner has Ocean got **Arkanoid's** up and ready to go than, well wait a minute, let Gremlin explain.



▲Arkanoids

Arkanoids is **Breakout,** or at least it is to **Breakout** what *The Price is Right* is to *Countdown* (a full guide to *Gremlin's* metaphors and similies entitled From Divs to Wombats is available at an exorbitant price.) Ocean has high hopes for it – **Breakout** was teeth grindingly addictive, **Arkanoids** is more so. Expect spots before the eyes as little balls bounce up and down, up. . .and. . .down, upanddownup and boing, boing, boing, boing, down. Good for Ocean, more money for the astute, if laconic, David Ward.

Ah, but. . . No wait, no don't 'ere no, listen missis, no. Well. Gremlin – the software house – purveyor of pretty good software to the world and sometime resident at US Gold towers (which is connected by secret tunnels to Ocean) is shortly to unleash upon the world a game called **Krack Out.** Now **Krack Out**, as you may imagine, is somewhat like **Breakout.** It could be described as being to **Breakout** what a Filofax is to the back of an old fag packet. Gremlin has high hopes for it, more money for the astute and snappily dressed Ian Stewart and. . . you get the picture. . .



▲Krack-Out

Anyway, at the Golden Joystick awards held by C+VG in some hotel or other, which two industry figures should find themselves on the same table but Ian Stewart and David Ward. *Gremlin* – yours truly – who has spys everywhere can say the conversation though by no means vitrolic did not go like this:

David Ward: "Ian I hear you're doing a game like **Breakout** – you know we have the licence for **Arkanoids**" Ian Stewart: "Oh well its just a coincidence that we're releasing **Krack-Out** at the same time as you're releasing **Arkanoids."** David Ward "Oh, alright then, say no more."

● In a story totally unrelated to the one about **Arkanoids**. *Gremlin* would like to pose the following question. Which two industry figures sitting together at the Golden Joysticks awards came up with the excellent nickname for Rod 'hold that boat' Cousins of 'Howard the Labyrinth'?

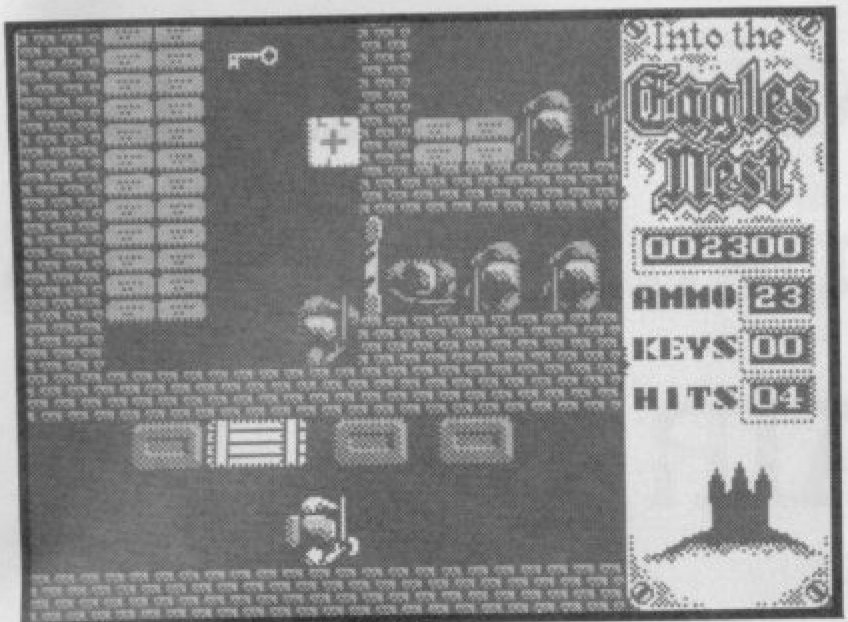
As you may have heard, and indeed read in this issue, Sir Clive X. has just launched a new computer. The machine is by a Cambridge computer company that has no connection with thingy Research. It is called the Z88. Please be clear about that, it is not called the you-know-what Z88 but just plain Z88. It has just, kind of, appeared. It so happens that the Z88 is what was once called the Pandora and is very much the computer that Sir Clive Wassname always wanted to put out.

When Sir Clive (deleted) sold out to Amstrad, big Al got not only the technology but also the rights to the name Sinclair, consequently Sir Clive cannot describe any computer he produces as a Sinclair product. The advertising blurb cheekily describes the Z88 as 'the new computer from Sir Clive Sinclair' which is presumably just about OK legally whereas 'the Sinclair Z88' is not.

Now you may feel this is all a bit silly but Amstrad wouldn't agree. The computer magazines have all been sent a curt little note from Amstrad warning them not to slip into the habit of referring to the machine as the (you know what) Z88. Amstrad is not a good company to offend, so *Gremlin* will say no more except to point out that with its non-standardness, untestedness, mail-order availability onlyness and superior pregnant-calculatorness Amstrad wouldn't be seen dead putting the damn machine out.

▼The man with no name





▲Monty Mole goes to Stalag Luft 87B

OK. So. You thought you were pretty clever. Not a few people rang the SU offices to point out that the pictures on the review of **Into the Eagles Nest** didn't exactly, as such, relate to the description of the game given in the text. Where, you asked, did a little cartoon mole fit into a **Gauntlet** – style game set in WWII? The pictures were in facet of **Aufwieder Sehen Monty** – latest opus from Gremlin – the other one – and there are some people who would see the whole thing as a bit of a Booboo. (Others might think it was more of a Yogi bear).

Gremlin – yours truly – can now exclusively reveal that the whole thing was *deliberate*, you don't think we'd be that stupid do you? We put in pictures of a completely different game *on purpose* because we wanted to see how astute our readers were. So, in future, whenever you see anything in SU which appears to be a few vouchers short of an electric toaster, DON'T PANIC. It's quite alright. Its just our way of saying "Can you spot the umpteen deliberate mistakes in this article." Hope that sorts it out.

Gremlin

Caption Compo No 6

The Morris dancer in last month's Gremlin compo proved to us that the good ole ZX81 is dead.

Most of you couldn't tell the difference between Sinclair's second computer and the stick held in said merry maker's other hand. Hugo Lodge of Cardiff in Wales got either himself or us – we're still not sure – confused. His quip was "In my right hand an original; in my left, a poor immitation". Which hand is which? MD's holding the ZX81 in his left and the stick in his right. Runner up, John Grant of Streatham, London, was more shrewd with "What a deal. I swapped this ZX81 for this piece of wood!"



The winner, by a mile, however, was John Williams of Middlewich Cheshire. His "Come on, the A-Team could make a tank out of that" had us swinging from the strip lighting. Well done, your unmarked £20 is on its way.



This month Gremlin's next door neighbour decided to take his ZX81 out of the loft and switch it on. As always, correct precautions must be taken to avoid Rampack wobble and burnout. Our friend's well prepared for any eventuality but what's 'e saying? Yes, it's another Gremlin Caption Compo. Make up a caption and you could win £20. Not bad, eh, for 12 words.

Send your entry to Gremlin Caption Competition No 6, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30/32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Entries must reach us by April 10.

Name..

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....

Caption (max 12 words)..

....

....

Gremlins Top Five Games

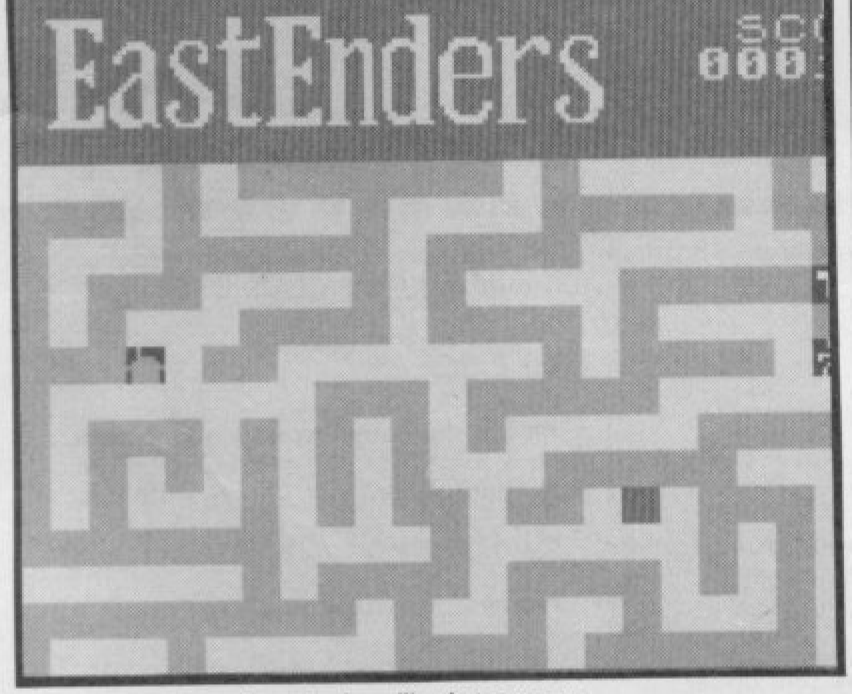
UCHI MATA
Hot off the presses, yet early versions of this one had to be recalled because it crashed

DANDY
Getting to later levels caused the game to top itself on early versions

LORD OF THE RINGS
Used the special Melbourne House 'Stream of Consciousness' parser in which random phrases are printed along with the text seemingly for the player's amusement.

EAST ENDERS
More of a bug looking for a game really

UP PERISCOPE
Few remember this gem but it was put out by Beyond when EMAP owned it and contained a place on the screen where no enemy could ever hit you



▲Eastenders. They *do* make them like that anymore

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